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Sew it

Feltie it

Sell it

Daisy pencil pot

Issue 2 • October

Craftseller

Make and sell your handmade crafts

137 makes & ideas

Earn extra cash this Christmas!

ETSY UK'S AMITY ROACH

"We're keen for UK crafters to join us"

HOW TO SELL CRAFTS

- *Beginner's guide*
- *START HERE*
- *Page 31*

XMAS CRAFT STALL

LITTLE BLUEBIRD

MAKE XMAS CARDS

PART 2 OUR ETSY GUIDE

SPEND £15, MAKE £150!

3 IDEAS TO TRY TODAY

✓ Expert advice on tagging

✓ How to take and upload your photos

ARE YOU CRAFTY ENOUGH?

JOIN OUR CRAFT VILLAGE

- *Share your skills*
- *Review products*
- *Make friends*

HANDMADE BEADS

RAISE £££s Craft for charity

9 772046 840001 02 Craftseller

PLUS Price your work ✿ My craft shop ✿ Best-selling tips

Craftseller

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Your FREE GIFT MAGAZINE & PATTERN

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Felt **Bluebird**

RATING Easy

INFO BOX
Size: 12½cm (5in) high
Time: 1½ hours
Cost: £1.50

Little round bluebird

While this little character isn't great on aerodynamics, he's highly loveable!

BY LAURA CLEMPSON

Bluebird's shape is so irresistibly tactile, and he will be simple to make from materials that are cheap and easy to source. Make him unique and just as adorable by choosing other felt colour combinations.

You will need

MATERIALS & CUTTING INSTRUCTIONS

- 4 x 4½cm (10 x 12in) pale blue wool felt: Cut 4 of Pattern A. Add ¼cm (⅛in) extra for the seam allowance
- Scraps of dark blue wool felt for the wings: Cut 4 of Pattern B*
- Scraps of brown wool felt for the feet: Cut 4 of Pattern C*
- Scraps of pale yellow felt for the beak: Cut 1 of Pattern D*
- Sewing cotton in pale blue, dark blue, brown, and yellow
- Toy stuffing
- Black embroidery thread, for eyes.

*No seam allowances are needed for B, C, and D.

We love USING LEFTOVER FABRICS TO CREATE A WHOLE WORLD OF MINI BLUEBIRDS!

FROM *LITTLE BIRDS* BY DESIGN COLLECTIVE, PUBLISHED BY STASH BOOKS AT C&T PUBLISHING

HOW TO MAKE THE BLUEBIRD

STEP 1 Pin 2 A panels together. Stitch along the seamline on one side only, using pale blue cotton thread. Repeat with the other 2 panels.

STEP 2 Pin and join one open edge from each set of panels together. Join the final open side, leaving a gap to allow for stuffing.

STEP 3 Turn right side out. Stuff the ball tightly. Carefully close the opening using the ladder stitch as shown in the diagram below.

STEP 4 Topstitch over the seams using dark blue cotton thread, as shown.

STEP 5 Sew the beak onto the front of the ball using yellow cotton thread. Satin stitch with black embroidery thread to create the eyes.

STEP 6 Use the blanket stitch to sew 2 wings together with pale blue cotton thread. Leave the bottom open. Carefully stuff and then sew up the opening. Repeat for the other wing and both feet. For the feet, use brown cotton thread.

STEP 7 Use the ladder stitch to securely attach each wing and foot to the ball.

Craftseller's
TOP SEWING TIPS

THE RIGHT STUFF

1 It's easy to accidentally rip seams open by over-enthusiastic stuffing. Add stuffing slowly and carefully, using a cocktail stick to poke it into small corners. Stop often to re-shape the item and see how much more stuffing it needs before sewing it closed.

SUPER STITCHES

2 A little embroidery can go a long way in looks. Use satin stitch to create small shapes and features – start by drawing an outline with a fabric pen, then work straight stitches close together to fill the space entirely.

COLOUR MATCH

3 Use the same colour thread as the felt you're working with, even if you're just attaching a small piece. While this means having more thread colours in stock, it also means getting a more professional-looking result that you can be proud of.

Sell MORE

Get ready for big orders with a little pre-prep...

TIMESAVER

If you're making a lot of these little bluebirds to sell, create permanent templates out of stiff cardboard that you can use over again. Put masking tape over the edges so they don't wear out as you draw and cut around them. You can also, have spares ready to replace worn-out sets as they become too tattered to use again.

Handsburgh...

Bluebird was included from *Little Birds* by Design Collective, published by Stash Books at C&T Publishing. It's available from Amazon.co.uk for £9.

Friends to tweet to

TWEETY FEEDS

FLOSSIE TEACAKES

@FlossieTeacakes

We love her gorgeous stitchy patterns and project ideas! Share your sewing tips and projects with her.

CARLEY

@VanillaPlum

She's an Australian tweeter who's working on achieving a handmade home (aren't we all?). She loves vintage, crochet and sewing.

THREADLESS

@Threadless

Threadless is a trendy T-shirt company that prints and produces funky designs, chosen by you. Join in to score the motifs being considered.

BAKERELLA

@Bakerella

The queens of the yummiest cake pops, cupcakes and other sweet treats! Catch up with all their latest gossip today; we guarantee you'll be drooling over their creations.

I SEW CUTE

@isewcute

We can't quite work out how she fits so many cute crafts into her life (her jewellery is to-die-for). Her profile page is pretty cool too, which is always a bonus in our books!

CATH KIDSTON

@CathKidston

Who doesn't adore Cath Kidston? Be the first to hear the latest news about their sales and product lines, take part in fabulous competitions and dream of your next purchase...

CRAFT GOSSIP

@CraftGossip

Sometimes a little tip or idea turns into a lot of inspiration for a new project, and that's what you'll get here – craft news, reviews and more.

Your Letters

Have you just finished a project? Got a new idea for your craft shop? We want to hear about it! Write to us at the address below...

Fab felties!

I loved the first issue of *Craftseller*; it's packed full of useful tips and ideas. I read my copy from cover to cover.

I adapted the cute Babushka Dolls design to make these little belly dancers! I used buttons and sparkly jewels to jazz them up, and attached brooch pins to put them on bags.
Sarah Jones, *Wigan*

EDITOR **Thanks, Sarah, and what a great idea to add brooch pins!**

PICTURE PERFECT

Don't downplay the importance of presentation; if you sell crafts online, good photography is really key.
Trish Martin, Leicester

A monster project

Here's my attempt at some monster toys from issue 1 of *Craftseller*. I mainly make and sell cards, but I wanted to try something different, and these fab monsters are certainly that! I love all of the different varieties of the monster, and I'm hoping to sell them at a tabletop sale soon.
Vicki Smith, *Worthing*

EDITOR **What a fantastic set of monsters, Vicki. Do let us know how many monster sales you make.**

My stash is always packed with countless balls of yarn. I love knitting and I've sold my knitted items for years – as well as scarves, gloves and hats during the colder months, headbands and light shrugs are really popular in the summer. I can't wait to see what projects are coming up in next issue's *Craftseller*!
Barbara Mills, *Weymouth*

EDITOR **I'm also a huge knitting fan, Barbara. It's great that you've figured out how to make it work for you all year round with seasonal accessories!**

MARKET RESEARCH

Know your market. My selling circle revolves around my daughter's school, so I make lots of children's cards as well as flowery designs.
Sally Baker, by email

My best OUTLET

FACE-TO-FACE

I sell a number of different handmade things, including these knitted angels and countless different fascinators. I've sold both at craft fairs and through Facebook, but I definitely think that selling face-to-face is the best.

It's great to be able to communicate directly with customers. Many people swear by online selling, but if you're not great at computers it can be daunting to begin with.
Alison Masterson, *Glasgow*

EDITOR **I agree, Alison. Taking the first steps to selling online can be scary. Get some confidence with our top tips about selling on Etsy on page 21.**

How to get in touch with us

Dear Craftseller,
Origin Publishing, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax St, Bristol BS1 3BN

icraft@craft-seller.com

Search for Craftseller on Facebook – look out for us on Twitter soon!

Travels WITH...

I saw the first issue of *Craftseller* in the shops right before I went on holiday, and had to take it with me! I've been thinking about opening an Etsy shop to sell some of my crafts, so the helpful advice I found in the magazine couldn't have come at a better time. I can't wait to see the next issue!
Chloe Weston, *Brighton*

EDITOR: **Thanks Chloe, that looks like a lovely place to have a holiday! Let us know how your shop goes.**

facebook

Our Facebook FANS SAY...

I finished reading *Craftseller* yesterday, and my head has been buzzing with ideas ever since!
Jennifer Livingstone

What a great, inspiring magazine! I'm rushing to my craft box to start making right now!
Lola Jane Baxter

***Craftseller* is just what I needed. Congratulations with the launch and finding a void in the marketplace. Keep up the good work!**
Su Freeman

Really enjoyed the first issue. Liked the mix of crafts, and more importantly, the mix of difficulties. I'm glad I put my usual magazine back in favour of *Craftseller*!
Sheran Taylor

MARVELLOUS MOUSE

My best SELLER

I've only been selling my Penny Mouse Kits for three months, but they've already taken off. The kits include everything to make your own Penny Mouse – the needle and pins, threads, stuffing and even the penny! When finished, you can give it as a gift, add a few drops of essential oil and pop it in a drawer, or use it as a pincushion. The jam jars they're supplied in can be re-used around the home.
Kate Molloy, *by email*

EDITOR: **I can see why they're selling so well – your Penny Mouse Kits are absolutely adorable, Kate!**

Look what I MADE!

Sweet treats

I wanted to share with you the knitted Ferrero Rochet chocolate covers that a group of volunteers and I have been selling to raise money for Hospice at Home in West Cumbria. So far, we have already raised £800, which we're delighted with.

I can't wait for the next issue of *Craftseller* – I've already made good use of the little book of labels.
Noreen Woolaghan

EDITOR: **That sounds like a fantastic cause – well done on raising so much through your crafts already, Noreen!**

A READER recommends

Best of British

After the royal wedding in April I noticed a huge trend in all things Britannia-themed. With this in mind, I made this Union Jack lamp using fabric, assorted buttons and some pennies. It was a huge success! I've now made a matching cushion that's also selling really well.
David Acklom, *East Dulwich*

EDITOR: **Spotting trends is a great way to increase sales, and you've done a great job with this design.**

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

I ask friends how much they'd pay for my crafts.
Esther Mason, Exeter

CRAFTY blogs

I love to blog...

http://stephaniejomayne.blogspot.com

I started my blog a few years ago to keep a record of what I was doing, and share my cards and pictures. It's a lot of fun and a never-ending source of inspiration. I've also had emails asking if I can make a personalised card for someone, and it's really nice to know people like your designs enough to get in touch.
Stephanie Mayne, *Petworth*

EDITOR: **Blogs are such a great way to show off what you can do!**

INFO BOX
Size: 22mm (7/8in)
Time: 2 hours
Cost: £1.50

Button up!

Vintage covered buttons add beauty to clothes or upholstery with little effort or expense

Use colours to theme your button collections, tones of blues, blues and greens will create must-have sets that customers will be hankering to buy

You will need

- Scraps of blue silky floral print fabric
- 8 x ready-to-cover button blanks, 22mm (7/8in) diameter
- Embroidery threads – navy, lime and turquoise
- Selection of seed beads and sequins
- Plain luggage label tags
- Printed paper (to complement the fabrics)
- Thin wire

BY SALLY SOUTHERN

In these upcycling times, people love to find ways to breathe new life into a beloved jacket or a favourite set of cushions. The trick is to change one aspect – and it'll be like new! Covered buttons are the upcycler's best friend for making something unique. Tell your customers that, by spending a relatively small amount on a new set of buttons, they'll save themselves the cost of buying a whole new item. While you can put leftover fabrics to cost effective use.

HOW TO MAKE THE BUTTONS

1 Cut out circles of each fabric larger than the button blanks (a guide to the size you need to cut should come with the button blanks). You will need six circles – three in the tweed and three in the silk fabrics.

2 Decorate each circle by adding beads, sequins or stitching at the centre. For example, you could sew a sequin with a bead in the middle on each of the floral print circles. For the tweed circles, sew either a flower made up of five individual chain stitches as petals, with a bead in the middle, or a star with a bead at each point and a cluster of beads in the centre.

3 Once the circles have been decorated, place the fabric over the button blank, fold under the edges and snap the back on, ensuring that the beads/stitches are in the middle of the button, and the fabric edges are neatly hidden.

4 Remove the string from a luggage label tag, then remove the re-enforcement rings from the label and put to one side. Cut out a rectangle of patterned craft paper and stick the label onto it. Then, using a ruler and craft knife, and a cutting mat, trim along the label edges so that the patterned paper fits exactly.

5 Make a hole at the top of the label and glue the re-enforcement ring back in position.

6 Thread the string through the hole, as shown, to hold securely.

7 On the back of the label – the plain side – mark the positions for the six buttons and make holes using a needle. Fasten the buttons onto the label using either thin wire threaded through, or stitch them in place with embroidery thread. To finish neatly, stick another rectangle of the patterned paper onto the back of the label, over the threads, and trim at the edge of the label as before.

MAKE SURE THE DECORATIONS ARE CENTRALLY PLACED ON THE BUTTONS FOR THE PRETTIEST EFFECT

We love

THE MIXTURE OF TEXTURES IN THIS PROJECT MAKE EACH BUTTON A LITTLE DIFFERENT – A UNIQUE APPEAL FOR BUYERS

Be unique

Make buttons that hold special memories...

PERSONALITY

Create buttons to order: perhaps someone has some fabric they love from a dress that served them well? You can preserve the memory in buttons that can go on to decorate a bag or cushion. The dress might be past its best but its memory lives on!

Bookshop...

Readers can purchase *Fast Fabric Gifts* for the special price of £6.99 (rrp £14.99) with free p&p (UK only). To order please call RUCraft on 0844 8805 852 or visit www.rucraft.co.uk and quote code R11392.

3 really useful *buttons*

GIVE YOUR ITEMS THE PERFECT HOMESPUN FINISH

Boxes of buttons

These boxes are crammed full of a selection of different buttons, all based around a colour theme. There are 19 stunning collections to choose from, including pastels, brights and Christmas glitz. With approximately 250 buttons in a box, they're a real bargain – the only problem will be picking your favourite.

✻ **Button boxes, £4.50 each (or three for £10).**
To order, call ☎ 01258 455 889 or ☎ 01782 751 700, or visit the website www.liz-craft.co.uk

Perfectly coordinated

Isn't it annoying when you can't find the right button to add that certain something to a handmade item? Well, these could be the answer. You can make your own buttons in a no time by covering the plastic pieces with fabric or felt – just clip all the parts together for a unique button or a funky badge.

✻ **Self cover buttons, £3.50 for 10.**
To order, visit www.lovepaperfish.com

Rockin' retro

Don't these buttons remind you of Liquorice Allsorts? They're slightly thicker than standard buttons, and come in an irresistible array of yummy colours. With 70 in a bag, they'll add pizzazz to any project.

✻ **Retro button bag, £6.90** *To order, visit www.lovepaperfish.com*

Turn £10 into more cash

Spend £15 make £150!

Take one fabric bundle for £10 and Gemma Jones, Craftseller's in-house crafter, will show you how to make a tidy profit

Each month, I'll design three small items so that you can make as many as you can from a £10 bundle of fabric and sell them for a profit. I've made one keyringe this month, which you'll find easy to reproduce and accessorise. You can make at least 30 of any design from one fabric bundle, and a few more if you add some felt. I added leftover buttons for an extra touch. There are lots of ways you can personalise the keyringe for your customers, here are a few ideas here to get you started

Gemma Jones working with textiles, and helps you find ways to get the most out of a fabric bundle

INFO BOX
Time: 1-2 hours
Cost: 50p each

Your £10 fabric bundle

Fabric bundles include an array of complementary prints and colours that you can combine any way you like in your projects.

Felt & buttons

If you like, you can use felt to back your keyring motifs, and buttons to embellish them.

You will need

- Fabric bundle, equivalent to 1.5 metres (1¾ yards) (from www.fabricrehab.co.uk)
- Fabric scissors
- Pins
- Red flower buttons
- Enamel wooden buttons
- Iron-on interfacing
- Felt
- Dressmaking tracing paper
- Keyrings
- Needle

Tip

KEEP YOUR PATTERNS FRESH AND CLEAN BY STORING THEM IN A SEALED CONTAINER, READY TO HAND TO CUSTOMERS OR YOU-DOWNERS

HOW TO MAKE THE KEYRINGS

1 Photocopy the patterns here, cut them out and trace them onto tracing paper. You will need two each of the main images but once you will need a back and front piece for all the designs. Store your patterns in a folder to keep them in good condition between uses.

2 Once you have chosen which fabrics you are going to use for which parts of the keyrings, pin the templates to the right side, cut and press. I have also incorporated felt for the backs of the flower and owl to give a different look, but fabric works just as well, as you can see with the heart keyring.

3 Use the same templates to cut out iron-on interfacing. Back your cut-out shapes with the interfacing. Put the interfacing sticky side down on the wrong side of the fabric, cover with a cloth and press with a hot steam iron. Check that the interfacing is stuck to the fabric – if it isn't, press it again.

4 Make the front of the keyring by layering the fabric. Then, machine appliqué using straight stitch and zigzag stitches, ironing after each layer to ensure a neat, professional finish. Take your time – I always find the first attempt at making

Take the perfect photograph

Good photos take planning, especially when you want to show your wares in the best way. Here are some things to consider...

Steady hand

Stay as still as possible, or use a tripod to get a clearly-defined photo

Staging

Find a clean, uncluttered spot to take your photo so the focus is only on the item itself

Natural light

Take advantage of natural light from a sunny day, but don't take photos in direct sunlight

Positioning

Place the item in context, as we've done here – let the customer see how they'd use it themselves, which helps it sell better

FINISHED SHOT
Clear colours, a cosy setting and a clean background let this simple pic say it all

something always takes the longest, but you will get quicker each time you make one. You will also find that the more you make, the more creative you will get.

5 Personalise the keyring with an initial or name (optional), worked onto the front or back.

6 Make a loop for the keyring with a piece of fabric by folding the fabric widthwise, then pressing and running a line of machine stitch along the centre using a contrasting thread. Don't worry about the raw edges at each end, because they will be sandwiched between the front and back. Stitch along the inside top edge of the front piece of the keyring.

7 Place the front and back of the keyring wrong sides together, aligning the raw edges, and machine stitch all around. Press.

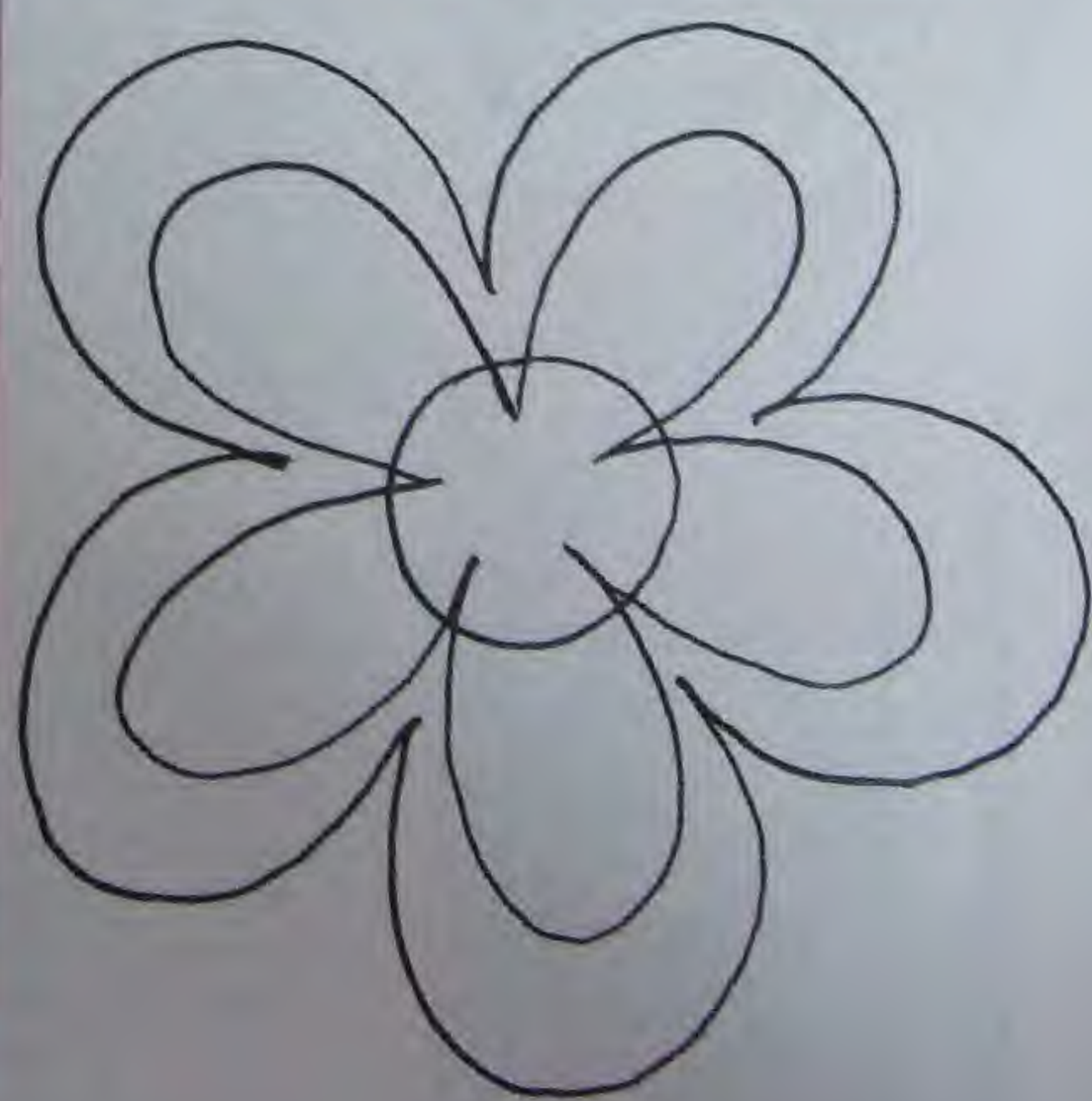
8 Stitch the buttons on securely. Finish by threading a metal key ring through the loop.

Shop talk...

If you are making quite a few of the same keyring from the same fabrics, but each one doesn't look exactly the same, you can explain in your product description that the keyring the customer receives will be in the colours of the picture but may not be the exact one. This will save you loads of time as taking and uploading photos can take a while.

Personalising your keyrings as a customer wants them is a great way of making more sales. You can charge a little extra for this service, too.

* Flower template (actual size)



Owl template (actual size)

STITCHED LINES GIVE A 'SKETCHY' APPEARANCE TO GET THE SHABBY CHIC LOOK

Tip

SAVE TIME AND TRIPLE BY PHOTOCOPYING THESE DESIGNS AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. LAMINATE THEM TO PROTECT THE PAPER OR MAKE A STURDY CARD TEMPLATE

Heart template (actual size)

CUT OUT EACH SIZE SEPARATELY, MAKING THREE TEMPLATES

Tag (actual size)

Top Etsy tips...

DESCRIPTION

1 *The description of your goods is very important. Get straight to the point when it comes to selling – don't waffle. For instance, describe your keyrings as 'beautiful handmade vintage inspired keyrings, decorated with buttons and lace'. 'Personalise for that perfect gift or buy it as a gift to yourself!'*

TAGGING

2 *Tag each item with words like gifts, personalised, handmade, etc. Customers use these to find your items. Tagging will help you gain sales.*

INFO BOX
Size: 10.5 x 14.8cm (4¼ x 5¾in)
Time: 3 hours
Cost: £1.50

Blackberry beauty

Turn a plain notebook into a keepsake diary by embroidering beaded flowers onto a pretty, hand-sewn cover...

You will need

MATERIALS

- A6 notebook, 10.5 x 14.8cm (4¼ x 5¾in)
- A4 (US letter) sheet of paper
- 20 x 40cm (8 x 16in) wool blanket material or felt
- black embroidery thread, coton perlé No 5 and No 8
- 21 black wooden beads, 4mm (⅛in)

Everyone needs a place to keep their innermost thoughts, best ideas and latest plans, and it should be as special and unique as the person writing in it. Use your sewing skills to transform a plain, average notebook into a gorgeous accessory that any lady will love to have in her handbag or on her bedside table. Women will love buying these for their girlfriends, and it's easy to make new variations on the basic pattern with different colours and designs.

Bookshop...

Readers can buy *Make Me, I'm Yours . . . Sewing* for the special price of £4.99 (rrp £9.99) with free p&p (UK only). To order, call RUCraft on 0844 8805 852 or visit www.rucraft.co.uk and quote code R11391 when you check out.

HOW TO MAKE THE BOOK COVER

STEP 1 Make a paper template of the shape required by tucking the paper inside the notebook so the paper protrudes by 6mm (¼in) at the top and one side. Mark the other edges and then cut the paper 6mm (¼in) larger than the notebook all around.

STEP 2 Lay the blanket fabric on a cutting mat and use a rotary cutter (or sharp scissors) to cut a piece the exact size of the paper template. Then, cut two strips the same depth and 5.5cm (2¼in) wide for the flaps.

STEP 3 Lay one of the flaps at the end of the large panel. Thread a needle with No 8 coton perlé and, inserting the needle from the flap side, work knotted blanket stitch around the edge of the flap. Tuck the book into the flap to check the cover is the correct length, and trim slightly if necessary.

STEP 4 Stitch the flap on the other end in the same way as described in the previous step. Continue to work knotted blanket stitch between the flaps on each side, and use a long enough length of thread so that you do not have to join in new thread, as there is nowhere to hide the ends on a single layer of fabric.

STEP 5 Next, tuck the notebook inside the cover. Using the beaded →

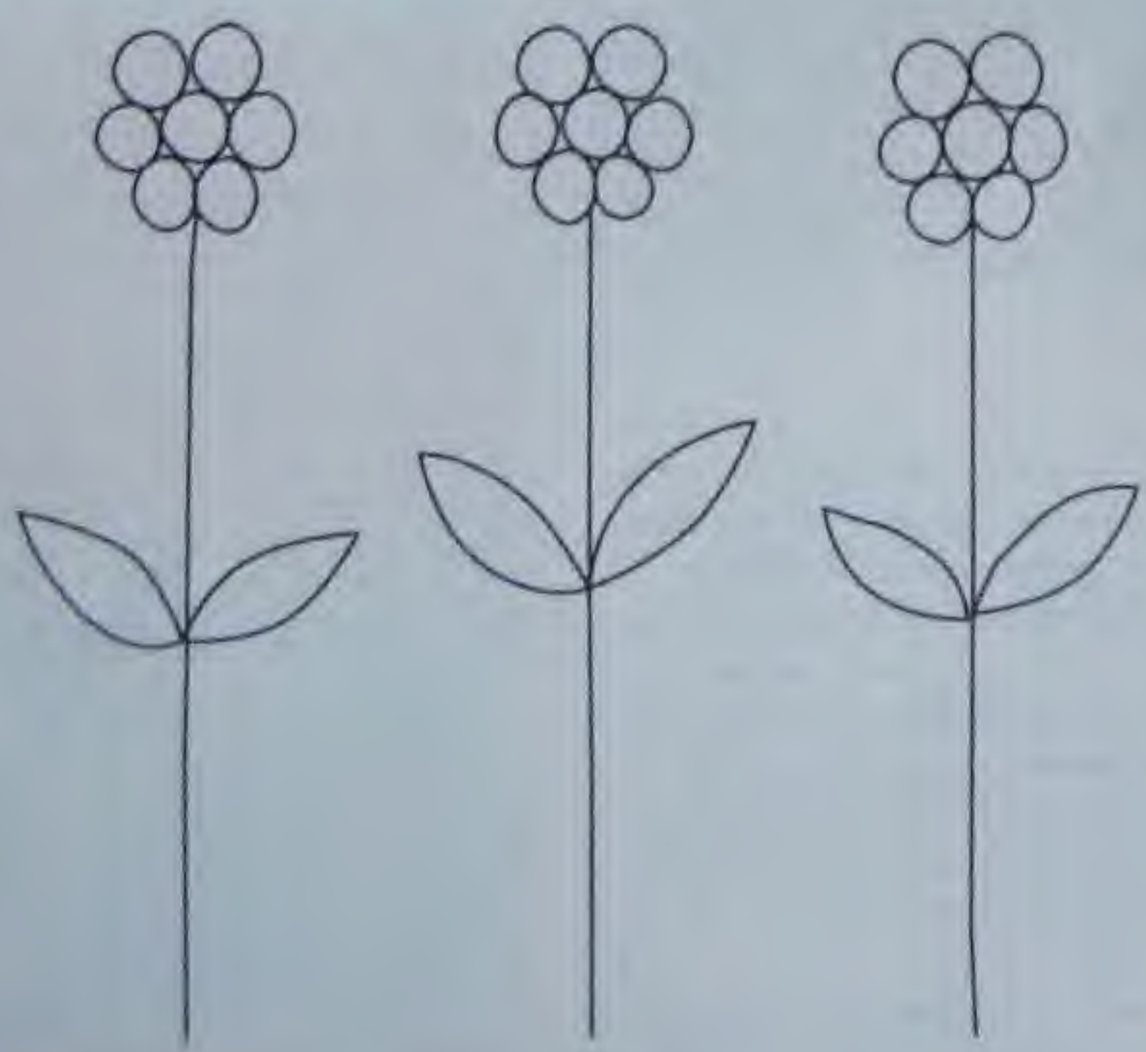
Beaded **Book Cover**

This pretty design has lots of scope and appeal – make both basic and more expensive versions using different fabrics and rich embellishments

flowers template below, mark the design centrally on the front cover with a fade-away marker. Remove the notebook. Work stem stitch (as described on the right) for the flower stalks and leaves along the marked lines using No 8 coton perlé.

STEP 6 Re-thread the needle with the finer coton perlé (No 5) and sew a round wood bead just above each of the stitched lines, and then stitch a further six beads around each of the flower centres. Secure the thread ends on the inside of the cover, to finish.

* Flower template (actual size)

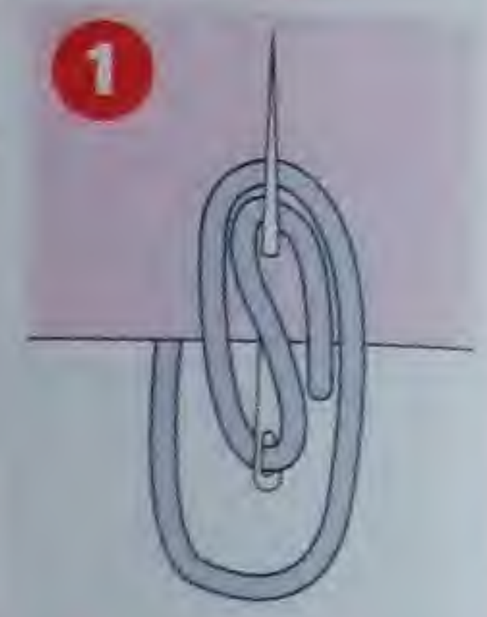


Stitches we've used

Stem stitch

Create the flower stems and leaves using this simple stitch. Following the diagram, first work a 6mm (¼in) straight stitch and then bring the needle back out 3mm (1/8in) from where the thread emerges. Holding the thread loop to one side, pull the needle through. Continue making 6mm (¼in) straight stitches, bringing the needle out on the same side of the fabric.

Knotted blanket stitch



This stitch is a more secure variation of blanket stitch, where the thread is wound around the needle to form a knot at the fabric edge. Following the diagrams, bring the needle out of the fabric and make a 6mm (¼in) stitch through the fabric. Wrap the thread over and behind the point of the needle and pull the needle through to form a knot at the edge of the fabric. Make another stitch 6mm (¼in) further along and repeat the process.

Adding large beads

When sewing beads individually, secure the thread carefully on the reverse when starting and finishing. Use quilting thread or a doubled sewing thread. Go through each bead twice to secure it. With larger beads, space the two threads out in the hole to hold the bead firmly in place. Work a tiny backstitch on the back before adding the next bead.

When adding large beads, use strong or doubled thread

This version of blanket stitch is great for joining edges

More projects to sell...

Use spare beads and fabric to make these luxury gift tags

Fashionable felt bangles are perfect gifts for any special occasion

Your essential guide to... Etsy

PART Two

You've taken the plunge and decided to set up your Etsy shop, and you're looking forward to making your first sales. But how do you charge the right prices, and keep sales up? Try our sales strategies

BY CHARLOTTE LYON

In part two of our Guide to Etsy we look to the future when you've set up your shop and are ready to make sales. After all the heard work involved in creating your handmade goodies, it's tempting to bump up the price, to make all the hard work worthwhile. Stop! Etsy buyers know they're getting something handmade and unique, but they still want a fair price. Browse around and see what similar items are going for, and match them.

KEEP 'EM KEEN

Lots of Etsy sellers make their money from repeat custom; so work hard to make sure your first customers come back, so you build up a good base.

Sinead Devlin from Galavant on Etsy believes it's the good relationship she has with her customers that makes her Etsy shop so popular.

"I really enjoy the interaction with my customers, so I always drop them a quick email once they've purchased something. And, I include a handwritten note with the package. I've had quite a few repeat customers – good customer service is the key."

Sinead Devlin prides herself in providing good customer service as well as quality products – if customers like their shopping experience, they'll want to come back

SPREAD THE WORD

Now imagine that you've got your shop up and running, you might think it's time to relax and let Etsy do the hard work for you. Not at all! Now's the perfect time to put your energies into promoting your shop.

Blogs are great places to spread the word, and you can set one up for free at wordpress.com or www.blogger.com. Twitter is another excellent place to reach customers with offers and product updates. If you create a page for your shop on Facebook, your friends are bound to show their support and get the ball rolling.

Make a large presence for yourself on Etsy too. Join circles, add favourites, and go on the Etsy forums to pick up useful advice from others.

Helen Foers from Storeyshop on Etsy does all this. "I promote my shop on Twitter, which I love because I'm a bit of a chatterbox, and Facebook too," she says. "I think the key to these is to show your personality and be yourself. I also have a blog, which I use to promote myself, as well as show off other people's amazing handmade goodies!" →

Many Etsy sellers make money from repeat custom, so make sure your first customers come back

Etsy

Profile

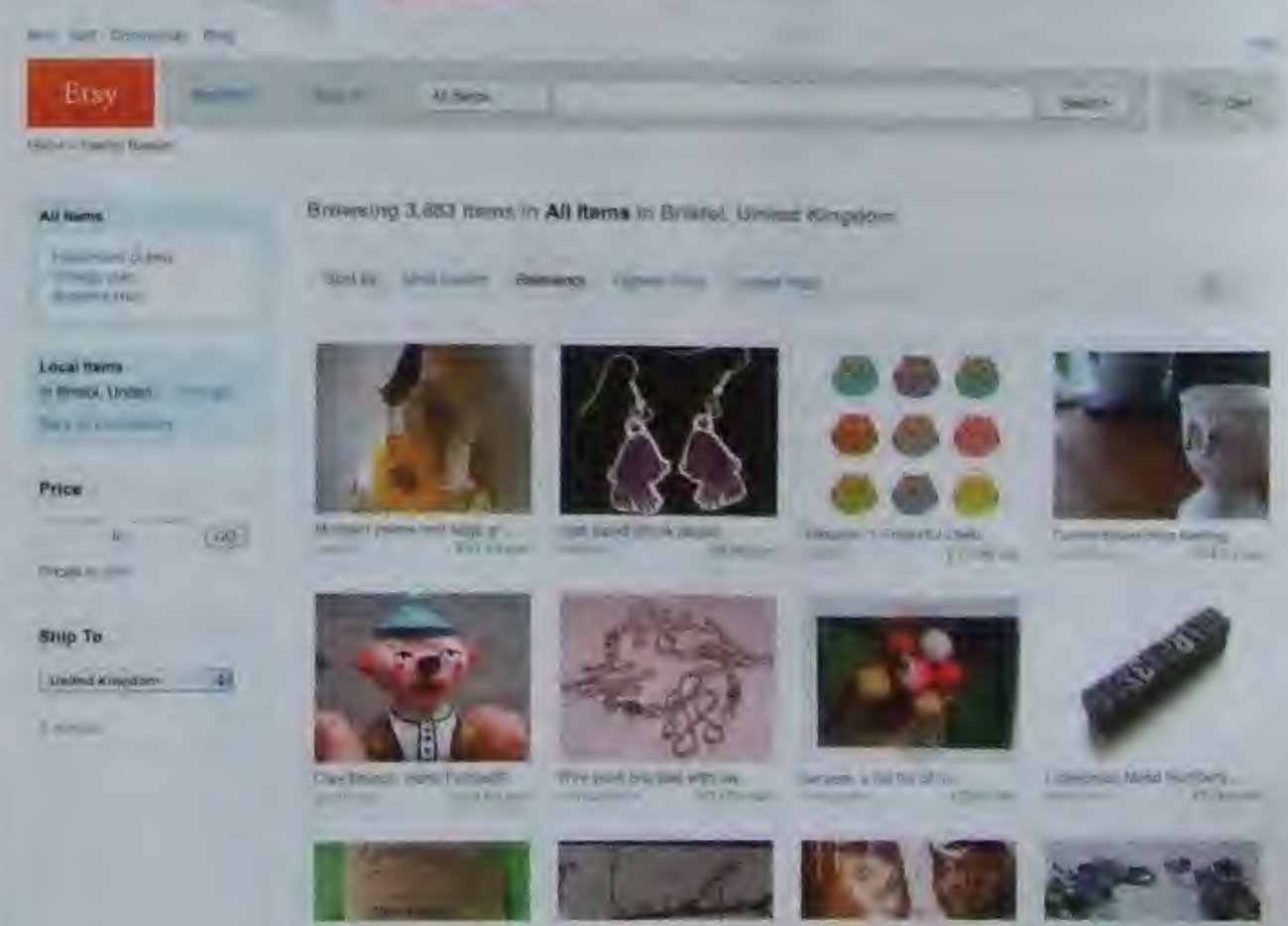
Helen Foers

Helen sells papercut greetings cards, posters and notebooks on her Etsy shop. To give her business a personal feel, she has a blog where she shares inspiring craft finds and snippets from daily life.

You can also find Helen writing about her handcrafts on Twitter, which is a great place to give customers quick, informal updates.

What do I pay?

- It's free to sign up to Etsy
- You pay 20 cents (around 12p) to list one item, no matter how big or small, or the price you're selling it for
- When you sell an item, Etsy takes 3.5% of the sale price
- You pay through your PayPal account, or with the credit card you register when you sign up
- Relisting an item to make it go to the front page costs the same as the original listing



SELL, SELL, SELL!

If sales are going well, you should have a large customer base and you'll have to keep wowing them to keep them interested. There are loads of ways to do this, and they all require a bit of time but, the more time you put in, the more sales you'll get.

Spend some time improving the appearance of your shop. If you don't know any arty friends who can help, don't worry – you can buy logos and shop fronts on Etsy. Think of it as a brand, and add your logo to everything you publish on the web. And, add more items to your shop as regularly as you can. If the shop

keeps changing, then people will keep coming back to see if there's anything new that they like.

You can also get your items noticed by relisting them. Relisting basically means that they'll come up at the top of any searches, rather than where they were before – a few pages in that customers may not get to. Sellers find that their sales improve dramatically after relisting an item. The best time to do this is between 7-10pm.

As well as adding new items, keep up with the current trends and review items that aren't selling well. Is there anything you can do about them? Are they too expensive? Are the photos doing them justice, or could they be improved? Could you rewrite the descriptions to make people look at your items differently?

BEST ADVICE

But, the best advice for making your shop a success comes from Storeyshop's Helen Foers. "I think I've become successful because of my enthusiasm for my products. After three years I still love cutting cards for people, and I'm making something that I would love to buy myself."

By creating a good internet presence, you'll reach people all over the world

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT ETSY

There's loads of advice out there – check these out:

- **The Dos and Don'ts of Etsy at www.etsy.com/policy/dosdonts – it includes all the rules and regulations in an easy-to-follow list**
- ***The Etsy Seller's Handbook* – an online collection of brilliant how tos about selling on Etsy**
- **The Etsy Success newsletter – a handy newsletter with all the new new hints, tips and advice**
- **Join an Etsy team (click on the Community tab to find the teams) or join a virtual lab, Etsy tutorials**
- **Follow The Storque, the Etsy blog – there's a UK version too**
- **Read *The Handmade Marketplace* by Kari Chapin – a book for anyone who wants to sell online. Buy it from Amazon.co.uk**

Next issue...
Your guide to Not on the High Street

3 really useful Pretty Printables

JUST PRESS P (PRINT) TO DOWNLOAD CREATIVITY

J'adore!

Delightful printables to buy and print off to use in your crafts. Shop owner Laetitia has done all the hard work so you don't even have to worry about infringing copyrights! With on-trend vintage designs for all occasions, we think these glamorous American Beauties squares (pictured) are just crying out to be made into chic fridge magnets.

- **American Beauties squares, $3.99.** *To order visit www.etsy.com/shop/petitvillage*

Plant something special

There are just so many fantastic ideas on this site that will get you tearing to your craft room straight away! These seed packets are particularly innovative as they can be easily resized. Why only fill them with seeds? Transform them into wedding favours or use them hide a gift card, the only limit is your imagination!

- **All Occasion seed packets, free.** *To download visit www.justsomethingimade.com*

Discover digis

Mo Manning is a children's book illustrator and we just love her digi stamps! Simply print off and colour in using your marker pens, paints or pencils then use them to make cards, tags and more! Don't forget to check her Angel Policy before you get crafty!

- **Digi stamps, from $3 each.** *To order visit www.mosdigitalpencil.com*

INFO BOX

Size: [illegible]
Time: [illegible]
Cost: [illegible]

Bunny feltie

RATING *Easy*

This adorable rabbit is easy to make and has so much personality – just pop him on your craft stall or website and watch him sell himself...

You will need

- [illegible] square of pastel blue felt
- Small scraps of turquoise, white, and bright green felt
- Embroidery floss in black, dusted blue, and turquoise
- 2 small round black beads
- Tiny quantity of toy stuffing
- Embroidery needle
- Beading needle
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Tracing paper
- Craft glue
- Toothpick or mum tweezers

BY NELLY PAILLOUX

The secret to this rabbit's success is in his irresistible charms. Get the entertained features right, and this product will be an instant hit. If your rabbit is a runaway success and you need to make more, organise your materials in advance and make sure your craft session are free and clear – this will speed up matting the fur and save time overall.

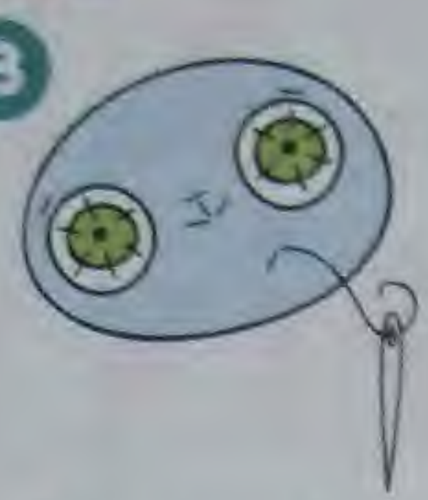
Top tip

[illegible]

HOW TO MAKE THE BUNNY FELTIE

1 Trace the pattern pieces onto tracing paper, and cut them out to make templates. Cut out two pieces each for the body and the head from the pastel blue felt, two ears from the turquoise felt, two eyes from the white felt, and two irises from the bright green felt. Using tiny dots of craft glue, first glue the irises in the centre of the eye pieces, then glue the eyes in position on one of the face pieces, checking against the photograph to position them correctly.

2 Thread a beading needle with two strands of black embroidery floss. Carefully stitch a black bead in the centre of each eye. Sew six short, straight stitches around the edge of each iris, as shown, giving Pensive Rabbit his characteristic eyes-wide-open expression.



3 Thread an embroidery needle with two strands of black embroidery floss and make Rabbit's eyebrows by sewing two tiny straight stitches for each one and placing at a slight angle. Stitch his nose and mouth using three stitches – a short horizontal, a short vertical, and a longer horizontal – arranged as shown. Finally make his mouth, which is a single off-centre short stitch.

4 Use craft glue to fix the rabbit's ears in position on the wrong side of the second head piece.

5 Align the two head pieces together, right sides out. Thread an embroidery needle with a single strand of pastel blue embroidery floss and sew the two head pieces together with a small, neat overstitch. Leave a gap at the base of the head (don't fasten off the thread) and fill it with a tiny amount of toy stuffing, using a toothpick or matchstick to help to distribute it evenly. Then, overstitch the gap closed.

6 Thread an embroidery needle with two strands of turquoise embroidery floss and outline Pensive Rabbit's arms with two lines of backstitch along the sides of his body. Check against the photograph to help you position them. Embroider his pockets with two single straight stitches at a slight angle, as shown.

7 Thread an embroidery needle with one strand of pastel blue floss, align the two body pieces, and sew them together using a small overstitch. Leave a gap at the neck (don't fasten off the thread) and fill Pensive Rabbit's body with a tiny amount of toy stuffing, using a toothpick or a matchstick to help you distribute it evenly. Don't use too much filling; he should be lightly padded, not stuffed. Then, stitch the gap closed.

8 Place Pensive Rabbit's head so that it overlaps his body at a slight angle, as shown. Using an embroidery needle and one strand of pastel blue embroidery floss, attach the head to the body using a small, neat overstitch, stitching through all four layers of felt. Try to place the new stitches over the earlier ones to give a neat finish.

Be a better sewer...

3 ways to work with felt

DRAWN OUT

1 If you're embroidering designs onto felt, draw them out first using a fabric pen, or one with disappearing ink. This prevents having to redo your sewing, saving valuable time.

PRE-SHRUNK

2 If you're making something from wool felt that's meant to be washed, or that's going to be added onto a washable item, wash the felt before you begin sewing so it shrinks down.

GO ACRYLIC

3 Does your customer have a wool allergy? Make the item in acrylic felt instead. Offer this as an option in the product description on your shop, and have a stash of acrylic felt ready.

Bookshop...

This is an extract from *Felties* by Nelly Palloux, published by Ivy Press www.ivypress.co.uk, priced £7.99 from all good bookshops.

Call for Designers

If you create super-fab makes, we'd love to hear from you!

Craftseller is on the look-out for designers and craft enthusiasts who make, sew, knit, crochet and more – we need talented crafties who create handmade items.

Could you see your designs in* Craftseller*? We'll pay you to create unique designs that our readers can make and sell all around the world!

If you have an online store, crafty website or blog, then we think we'd be a perfect match...

Send us a pic of your makes to the addresses below, and we'll see if you've got what it takes!

Write to:
Craftseller Craft Village, 9th Floor, Tower House, Fairfax St, Bristol BS1 3NB

Email us:
icraft@craft-seller.com

3 really useful *book reviews*

THE PERFECT READS TO GET YOU CRAFTING!

Give something back

Have you got crafty skills that you're desperate to put to a good use? Want to help others less fortunate? Each step-by-step project in this book is matched to a specific charity, with suggestions for other places to donate to. Our favourites include a colourful quilt for children in hospital, and fun tug toys to make for animal shelters.

✻ ***Craft Hope (Handmade Crafts for a Cause)* by Jade Sims, £12.99.** *To order, log on to www.amazon.co.uk*

Reduce, reuse... upcycle!

We've all got a stash of newspapers and magazines lying around – combine that with the piles of irritating junk mail we get every day, and put them to good use by making unique handmade paper! This fun book shows you how to make the sheets, and gives dozens of ideas for projects to make. It's great fun for everyone!

✻ ***Trash-to-Treasure Papermaking* by Arnold Grummer, £12.99.** *To order, log on to www.amazon.co.uk*

Dolly mama

Who can resist a cute handmade dolly? There's a fabulous selection of designs in this book for everyone to make, from beginners to experts. And once you've made your doll, you can create a whole wardrobe of clothes for them too!

✻ ***Wee Wonderfuls: 24 Dolls to Sew and Love* by Hillary Lang, £16.99.** *To order visit www.amazon.co.uk*

INFO BOX
Size: to fit a 4-cup teapot
Time: 4 hours

RATING *Easy*

Time for tea

No craft stall is complete without a few tea cosies for everyone's favourite time of day – use this quick and easy design to make your own essential teapot accessories

BY DOROTHY WOOD

Add a contemporary style to traditional tea cosies with this simple design – it just takes one ball of yarn to make, plus a few odds and ends for embroidery. A selection of colourful cosies like these will be irresistible to any tea lover, and they're so easy to personalise with different colour and embroidery themes. If you've got a spare ball of yarn, you can whip up your first one this afternoon.

✻ Quick-to-knit tea cosies are so saleable, whatever the time of year

You will need

MATERIALS

- 1 x 100g ball of Rowan Pure Wool Aran in Vert (shade 686) or similar
- Rowan Pure Wool Aran in Honey (shade 678), Buttercup (shade 689) and Buttermilk (shade 687), for embroidery
- 4.5mm (UK size 7, US size 7) knitting needles

FINISHED SIZE:

- To fit a four-cup teapot, with a 10cm or 4in diameter

Style your cosies in a number of different ways to match a variety of tea sets – experiment with embroidery patterns to create different shapes and abstract designs

Top tip

HAVE A SET OF PLAIN TEA COSIES ALL READY TO DECORATE AS PER YOUR CUSTOMERS' WISHES

Abbreviations

cm	centimetre(s)
in	inch(es)
K	knit
P	purl
st(s)	stitch(es)
st-st	stocking stitch

Tension

Yarn used knits as aran – 19sts and 25 rows to 10cm or 4in over st-st, using 4.5mm (UK 7, US 7) knitting needles.

Basic pattern

Cast on 28sts in the main colour, using the thumb method.
Work three rows in K1, P1 rib.
Row 1 – P1, K1 to the end.
Row 2 – K1, P1 to the end.
Repeat these two rows 14 more times, ending on a row 2.
Knit two rows in K1, P1 rib.
Cast off in rib.
Knit a second side to match.

To make up

Join the rib sections neatly at the bottom on each side. At the top, join the rib section only on one side, and sew a slightly longer seam on the side with the spout to improve the fit. Or, you can try the cosy on your teapot before you've finished the seams, and adjust them as necessary.

Thread a tapestry needle with a long length of Honey. Work blanket stitch around the top edge of the cosy. Make four flowers in Honey, Buttermilk and Burlesque by working 10-12 straight stitches in an asterisk shape, with a small gap in the middle. Work French knots in a contrast colour in the centre of each flower. Work flowers on the other side, and sew in all yarn ends.

Sell MORE

Make different sizes to fit a range of teapots

PRICE POINT

Charge a little extra for your tea cosies when you add pretty beads as embellishments. For instance, sew a few seed beads into the centre of each flower instead of making French knots, to give texture, sparkle and a hint of luxury.

Special gifts...

These delicate geranium cross stitch designs add a lovely touch to home décor
Turn to page 59

This pretty desk ornament is a pencil pot with daisy pen toppers
Turn to page 72

Make stylish beads like these, and create your own range of jewellery
Turn to page 54

Start selling in 3 easy steps

Are you ready to open your first craft shop, or do you need to do some work first? Find out with our handy tips and tools...

So, you've enjoyed making things for some time, and the idea of selling your crafts has been at the back of your mind for a while. Perhaps you want some extra cash to put towards a special holiday, or maybe you think your creations could really bring in the readies and earn you a living? Whatever your financial goals, there are fundamental steps that every crafter should go through to ensure their selling is a success. We know that you have bags of enthusiasm for what you do, but you won't become a successful seller on passion alone – though it definitely helps! First, find out what kind of craft seller you'd be with our fun quiz, work your way through the points in our checklist, and then study our giant chart to find out where best to sell your wares...

PART 1 What kind of craft seller are you?

Make your way through our flow chart to find out

Is crafting your passion?

Start HERE

YES – Do you only make things that *you* like, rather than items that others like?

NO – You're not ready to sell quite yet, but keep reading *Craftseller* and our fab projects and features will soon give you the bug!

YES – You'd be best off selling to like-minded friends and family members with similar tastes to your own. You could try selling on big websites such as Etsy, but if you're unable to spot a gap in the market and create items accordingly, you may struggle to compete with other sellers. See our chart on page 32 for more info.

NO – Do you ask friends and family for honest feedback on your work?

YES – Are you able to set yourself a deadline and stick to it?

NO – Good for you for being open to what your market wants! But, get some honest feedback on your makes before selling them. Then, move onto our checklist on page 32.

YES – You're able to make whatever you put your mind to, and you have the motivation to set targets and stick to them – the craft selling world is your oyster! You're ready to move on to our checklist on page 32, and then decide where you want to sell your items with our handy chart.

NO – You may find it hard to work under pressure – don't panic, lots of crafters do. If you want to keep production levels relatively low, you should steer clear of big websites and sell to friends, family, work colleagues, or at fairs. Refer to our chart on page 32 for help.

Continue to steps 2 and 3

BY DIANE HOLLANDS

My craft seller CHECKLIST – PART 2

Start on your way to selling with this handy checklist. Tick off each point as you address it; when you get to the end of the list, you're ready to be a craft seller!

- ☐ **What do I want to sell?**
- ☐ **Decide on a unique selling point (USP) – what standout benefit does my product offer? Creating a USP is one of the trickiest parts of business, but also one of the most important, so take time to get it right.**
- ☐ **How much time can I afford to devote to my craft?**
- ☐ **How much do I have to spend on business set-up costs?**
- ☐ **Where should I be selling my creations? (refer to the great big chart on the next two pages to help you decide).**
- ☐ **Will a website and/or blog benefit my business?**
- ☐ **If selling online, do I have a way to take good-quality photos? These are paramount to good sales volumes.**
- ☐ **Decide on a name for my company (think carefully as it can be difficult to change this further down the line).**
- ☐ **Get business cards made.**
- ☐ **Decide if I'll be aiming at the luxury or practical market.**
- ☐ **Research my market thoroughly.**
- ☐ **In what price range do I want my goods to sit?**
- ☐ **How could family and friends help to get my craft selling venture off the ground?**
- ☐ **Are there any craft or business courses that will help make my business a success?**

PART 3 The great big *Craftseller* chart

You're ready to sell, but where? We weigh up the pros and cons of popular options so you can choose the best one for you...

Website or Venue	Outlay	Other fees	Advantages
CAR BOOT SALE	**Varies – typically between £7 and £12**	Petrol to get there	**Good way to clear old stock** **Big footfall if boot sale is busy** **No need to book in advance – just turn up on the day**
DA WANDA	Free to register	**5% commission on sales** **No listing fees currently, but there are plans to introduce them at some point in 2011**	Option to sell nationwide or worldwide
EBAY	**No joining fee**	£0-1.30 insertion (listing) fee 10% of final selling price (up to £40 max) payable if item sells Listing upgrade fees £0-1.35 Fees vary for 'buy it now' auctions	**Can sell items quickly with the 'buy it now' option** **With the standard auction format and chance of a bidding war, you could make more money than expected** **You can put a reserve on your auction to guarantee a minimum price if your items sell**
ETSY	Free to sign up	**20 US cents (around 13p) for each individual item listed** **3.5% commission on sales**	If the item doesn't sell after four months, it's easy to relist it at the same price Website popular worldwide, particularly in the UK and USA

FOLKSY	**No sign-up costs**	20p per listing (whatever the quantity) 5% commission on sales	**Auctions last for six months** **Being active on the Folksy blog can boost your sales**
FRIENDS, FAMILY AND WORK COLLEAGUES	No outlay	**No fees**	Zero or low marketing costs (done via word of mouth) Easier to keep up with demand – more manageable quantities Low risk and minimal expenses People like to buy from crafters they know
HOME CRAFT PARTIES	**No outlay**	Host to pay for drinks and nibbles Commission payment to host	**Most people will buy at least one item** **No competition from other crafters** **Good way to find out what your target market wants** **Your customers can meet and find out more about you**
MARKET STALL	Varies, depending on location and market fees	**Decorations and embellishments, if desired**	Overheads lower than for a shop You can hand out flyers and business cards You can build up a rapport with customers You don't need to be web savvy to sell on a stall
ARTISI	**Free to register**	3% commission on sales 20p per listing (whatever the quantity)	**Get a free domain name, eg. http://yourshop.misi.co.uk** **12 month listings (unless your item sells before then)** **Payment goes direct to you via PayPal**
NOT ON THE HIGH STREET	One-off bespoke joining fee	**No other fees**	UK's top online marketplace for small, creative businesses Award-winning website A rigorous seller selection process means that the crafts sold on the site are very highly regarded
OWN WEBSITE	**Cost of web space and domain name**	Web space rental Domain name renewal	**You have control over how your work is presented** **You get the web address of your choice (if available)** **No sales commission to pay to a third party**
SCHOOL/ CHURCH FETE	Dependent on fete	**No other fees**	Low cost and personal way to promote your craft business within your local community Opportunity to chat to potential customers face-to-face, and pick up commissions for future projects
SHOP UNIT	**Shop rental and public liability insurance**	Shop fittings, overhead costs	**You can present your goods in the way you choose** **Customers get to see your work in the flesh** **Advertise by having a website , blog or online shop too**

INFO BOX

Christmas charm...

Give your Christmas craft shop a festive edge by selling these gorgeous embroidered cards – there's no better time to start!

RATING
Moderate

You will need

- Fairy Lights download kit (www.pinkpetticoat.co.uk)
- Antique white 32-count Zweigart linen
- Cream and black card
- White paper
- Black thread
- Various buttons
- Various fabric scraps
- Bondaweb

ADD A CHEERFUL CHRISTMAS GREETING TO THE TOP OF YOUR EMBROIDERED DESIGNS

BY DOROTHY WOOD

Christmas is the best time to sell your cards, as everyone will want special greetings to send to their loved ones. Make sure yours stand out by working embroidered designs on the front using spare fabric and buttons, and a bit of machine sewing. Practise sewing onto card before making your first one; as your skills grow, you can try more complicated designs like our star and pudding cards on the next page.

Top tip

WHEN YOU'VE HAD THE FUN OF MACHINE STITCHING INTO CARD, COORDINATE WITH YOUR OWN DESIGNS TO FIND INTERESTING LINES

HOW TO MAKE THE CARDS

Stocking

Step 1 Print a sheet of scallop willow paper and trim to measure 10.5 x 15cm (4 x 6in). Cut an aperture measuring 4.5 x 9cm (1¾ x 3½in) in the centre of the paper. Stick to the base card.

Step 2 Trace the separate shapes that make up the stocking, onto Bondaweb, then roughly cut out. Place the Bondaweb shapes onto the reverse side of different scraps of fabric and press with a dry, medium heat iron. Cut out the shapes along the lines.

Step 3 Peel off the backing paper from the shapes and arrange onto a piece of linen measuring 7.5 x 12cm (3 x 4¾in). Press with an iron again. Using a sewing machine, with the darning foot attached, stitch around the edges of the stocking shape.

Step 4 Machine stitch the linen panel onto the centre of the base card, as shown in the photograph.

Step 5 Print the greeting and cut it out, as shown. Mount onto black card and stick to the base card. Lastly, add a pink button tied with black thread.

Tree

Step 1 Print a sheet of pink words paper and trim to measure 10.5 x 15cm (4 x 6in). Cut an aperture measuring 6.5 x 11cm (2½ x 4¼in) in the centre of the paper. Stick to the base card.

Step 2 Trace the separate shapes that make up the tree and trunk onto Bondaweb, then roughly cut out. Place the Bondaweb shapes onto the reverse side of different scraps of fabric and press with a dry, medium heat iron. Cut out.

Step 3 Peel off the backing paper from the shapes and arrange onto a piece of linen measuring 9 x 12.5cm (3½ x 5in). Press with an iron again. Using a sewing machine, with the darning foot attached, stitch around the edges of the tree and tree trunk.

Step 4 Machine stitch the linen panel to the centre of the base card, as shown in the photograph.

Step 5 Print the greeting and cut out, as shown. Mount onto black card, and stick to the base card. Lastly, add a button.

Presents

Step 1 Print a sheet of red words papers, trim to measure

COMBINE DIFFERENT FABRIC PATTERNS TO MAKE THIS YUMMY CHRISTMAS PUDDING

Top tip

A DOWNLOAD KIT LIKE THIS IS A GREAT INVESTMENT – YOU CAN PRINT OUT THE DESIGNS AGAIN AND AGAIN

HOW TO MAKE THE PUDDING CARD

1 Print a sheet of words paper. Trim to measure 14 x 14cm (5½ x 5½in) and cut an aperture measuring 10 x 10cm (4 x 4in). Stick to the base card.

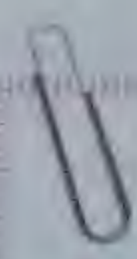
2 Trace the two pudding shapes and the holly leaves onto Bondaweb, then roughly cut out with scissors.

3 Place the Bondaweb shapes onto the reverse side of different scraps of fabric and press with a dry, medium heat iron. Cut out the shapes.

4 Peel off the backing paper from the shapes and arrange onto a piece of linen measuring 11 x 11cm (4¼ x 4½in). Press with an iron.

5 Using a sewing machine (darning foot attached) stitch around the edges of the pudding and add the detail.

6 Stitch the linen panel onto the base card, at an angle. Print the greeting, then mount onto black card and stick in place. Add the buttons.



Unique selling point

Use fabric scraps from other projects when you make these cards – you only need a bit, and they just have to be red or green!

Happy holiday greetings:

Peace and joy
Holiday sparkle
Joy to the world
Under the mistletoe
Have a cool yule

On a budget?

Sift through your stash to find things to decorate these cards with – single buttons and bits of ribbon are perfect

10.5 x 7.5cm (4 x 3in). Trim along the top edge and stick to the base card. Machine stitch along the top of the paper panel, as shown.

Step 2 Trace the separate shapes that make up the present stack, onto Bondaweb, then roughly cut out. Place the Bondaweb shapes onto the reverse side of different scraps of fabric and press with a dry, medium heat iron. Cut out the shapes along the lines, using scissors.

Step 3 Peel off the backing paper from the shapes and arrange onto a piece of linen measuring 7 x 11.5cm (2¾ x 4½in). Press with an iron again. Using a sewing machine, with the darning foot attached, stitch across the presents and add a bow.

Step 4 Machine stitch the linen panel to the base card, at an angle.

Step 5 Print the greeting and cut out. Mount onto black card, add a length of black thread and stick to the base card, using foam pads. Add a brass button tied with black thread onto the large present.

Star

Step 1 Print a sheet of stars paper. Trim to measure 14 x 14cm (5½ x 5½in) and cut an aperture measuring 8 x 8cm (3 x 3in). Then, stick the paper onto the base card.

Step 2 Trace the two separate shapes that make up the layered star design, onto Bondaweb, then roughly cut out, using scissors.

Step 3 Place the Bondaweb shapes onto the reverse side of different scraps of fabric and press with a dry, medium heat iron. Cut out.

Step 4 Peel off the backing paper from the shapes and arrange onto a piece of linen measuring 11 x 11cm (4½ x 4½in). Press with an iron.

Step 5 Using a sewing machine, with the darning foot attached, stitch around the edges of the large star, and then add the detail.

Step 6 Stitch the linen panel to the base card, at an angle. Print the greeting, mount onto black card and stick in place. Add buttons as shown.

More Christmas ideas...

Make your own Christmas card designs with our free paper downloads
Turn to page 86

Find out what craftsellers should be doing to get ready for Christmas
Turn to page 68

3 really useful

Fun and frosty products

GREAT IDEAS TO MAKE YOUR BEST CARDS BETTER

Penguin party

Penguins are irresistibly adorable, and this Pickle & Penguin stamp is just the cutest. Add a sprinkle of glitter to his hat for that essential sparkly finish. There are six previous designs to choose from in the collection. Find out how to win some on page 80.

Pickle with Sledge stamp, £5.40. *To find a stockist near you, visit* **www.wildhorseindia.co.uk**

Walking in the air

The Snowman is a classic Christmas film that's adored by all ages, and now you can create gorgeous designs using the well-loved characters. This CD-ROM includes papers, images, toppers and more for all your festive cardmaking needs.

The Snowman CD-Rom, £14.99. *To order, call 0 08456 296 0042 or visit* **www.crafterscompanion.co.uk**

Frost it!

Where would any Christmas cardmaker be without a good supply of glitter in their stash? This super fine, iridescent glitter by Stampendous is essential for adding snowy effects and highlighting designs for that gorgeous, glitzy finish. We love using it with Glossy Accents for a fantastic 3D effect.

Stampendous Multi Crystal Ultrafine glitter, £3.40. *To order, call 0 01942 896 368 or visit* **www.thecraftbarn.co.uk**

RATING Easy

INFO BOX
Size: various
Time: 2 hours
Cost: under £1

Beautiful bangles

Big, bold bracelets that don't clang and clunk together are so on-trend right now – each one will be an original

When you are selling or donating your bangles, please tell recipients that it is a *Mag Kandis* design from *Gifted*

BY MAGS KANDIS

These silent bangles look gorgeous. Just watch as the first time you wear an armful on a 'girl's night', all your friends will want their own. It'll take an evening to knit up a basket full of bases, and the next day just throw them into the wash to felt them. Then, spend some time surrounded by colourful yarns, wrapping and playing to make each bangle unique – and highly saleable.

You will need

BASE YARN

* Small amounts of chunky or DK yarns in different colours, which have a wool content. Any kind of 100 percent wool yarn that is not labelled 'super-wash' will work. 100% wool is best, though you can experiment with other combinations of wool blends.

WRAPPING YARN

* Fill a basket with small amounts of different weights and qualities of your favourite coloured yarns. Remember, you can also use lengths of ribbon, braid, lace, or add beads and glitter threads – in fact, anything goes!

Top tip

[illegible]

NEEDLES

* 8mm (UK 0, US11) knitting needles, plus one extra to use for the three-needle cast off at the end of the project.
* Tapestry needle

TENSION & FINISHED SIZE

* Tension: approx 10 stitches and 13 rows to 10cm (4in), measured over stocking stitch, before felting. Exact tension is not crucial for this project.
* Size: inside circumference of each bangle is approx 19cm (7½in). Add or subtract stitches and rows to make the bangle base a different size. The bangles are shown in two sizes.

WRAPPING – THE FUN PART

* Once you've knitted your bangle base, felted it and allowed it to dry, you're ready to begin wrapping. Thread a length of wrapping yarn on a tapestry needle. Secure the yarn on the inside of the bangle, then wrap the yarn around the base ring, using even tension to ensure that the base ring doesn't compress too tightly or the wraps aren't too loose. The wraps may be slightly uneven. Repeat using different shades and qualities of yarns. Add sequins, beads, sparkly bits and lace to create your own unique designs.

Getting it right

There is no magic formula when it comes to the shrinking factor of a felted project. Every yarn felts differently – varying colours and shades of the same yarn can lead to very creative results. Remember that small projects like these are best hand-felted if you're making a lot at once.

START BY KNITTING THE BANGLE BASE

The bangles are shown in two sizes, with the thicker size in brackets. Cast on and knit a row using a waste yarn first, then knit the bangle's base.

STEP 1 Using any colour of chunky yarn as waste yarn and 8mm knitting needles, cast on 5 (7) sts. Work 2 rows.

STEP 2 Using chosen yarn for the base, work in st-st for 40 rows to create a long thin strip of knitted fabric – this will be about 31cm (12¼in) long.

STEP 3 Carefully remove the waste yarn, and place the five stitches on to the spare knitting needle.

STEP 4 You'll now join the ends of the strip to create a ring. With right sides facing, insert the tip of the third needle into the first stitch on one needle, then into the first stitch of the other needle. Knit two stitches together. (Again), *knit the first stitch from each needle together. Pass the previous stitch over this stitch. Repeat from * to end.

STEP 5 Weave in loose ends.

Your easy guide to felting

NOT JUST FOR SHEEP

When it comes to felting, you don't have to limit yourself to pure wool. Alpaca, camel, yak, cashmere, mohair, and angora all have great felting potential. Try felting blends of these fibres with non-felting fibres such as silk, tencel, rayon, or soy for interesting effects.

KEEP CHECKING

Be careful not to let the inside of a project fuse together. I had to gently pry apart the sides of my first felted egg cosy, and the crease never went away. Check the progress periodically, and never underestimate how quickly an item can go from floppy to felted.

SWATCH IT

If you get hooked on felting, it's useful to knit swatches beforehand to test how a particular yarn and shade felts. Though, it's not so important for projects such as these bangles, because the differences make them unique.

JUST IN CASE

When felting items of any size in the washing machine, remember to first place the project in a lingerie bag or pillowcase. This will reduce the amount of fibre that can escape and clog the machine, or attach to the next load of laundry.

Wrap the bangles with different embroidery thread, as well as yarn

HOW TO FELT THE BANGLE BASE

STEP 1 Felting is caused by heat and agitation. If you're felting by hand, use very hot water and swish the bangle bases around to help felt the fibres together. If they don't felt, then either the water isn't hot enough or the wool content isn't high enough. If you're felting using your washing machine, set to a fairly high temperature wash and run just a wash and drain programme. You can add soap but it's not necessary.

STEP 2 When the programme has finished, rinse your pieces with cool water and wring them out gently. Place them on a thick towel to dry.

STEP 3 Let the piece dry thoroughly before wrapping with threads.

STEP 4 Remember than every yarn and even shade of yarn will felt differently. That's all part of the fun! You may need to experiment with different wash settings before you get the exact finish that you want. Don't be put off if you don't achieve the perfect felting finish first time – keep trying, and enjoy the journey!

Sell MORE

Sell a few bangles together as a matching set

MIX IT UP

In addition to selling individual bangles, have special combinations of three or four bangles in complementary colours and stripes to encourage bulk buys. Give them names – find inspiration in fashion brands.

Gifted

Lovely little things to knit & crochet

by Mags Kandis
9781596681781
£17.99
Published by Interweave Press
Distributed by Search Press

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More quick projects...

Make more bracelets out of pretty clay beads. *Turn to page 54*

Combine textures on these festive Christmas cards *Turn to page 34*

Use fabric-covered buttons as luxury gift tags *Turn to page 10*

Celebrate in style...

The nation's obsession with bunting looks set to continue – steer away from shabby chic and switch your customers on to posh pom-poms and prints for a bit of pomp and ceremony

BY KATE HAXELL

RATING Easy

When you are selling or donating your bunting, please tell recipients that is a *Kate Haxell* design from *Bunting & Pennants*

Market this fab, festive bunting as suitable for weddings or birthday parties, or just to add a fun look to a playroom or child's bedroom. For a more sophisticated finish, collect different spotty fabrics in one colour palette and make the bunting from these. The posh look needn't cost a lot, you can pick quality off-cuts from your own stash, and search in the bargain bins for good-looking fabrics at half the price.

You will need

- Card for template
- For each pennant: two pieces of fabric measuring at least 17 x 18cm (6¾ x 7in)
- Pom-pom trims
- Sewing thread
- Individual pom-poms
- Strip of straight grain fabric for several joined strips measuring 5cm (2in) by the required length of the bunting, allowing for ties at each end

TOOLS

- Pencil
- Ruler
- Paper scissors
- Fabric marker
- Fabric scissors
- Pins
- Sewing machine
- Iron
- 3cm (1¼in) bias tape maker
- Hand sewing needle

USE LEFTOVER FABRIC PIECES TO MAKE CHEAP BUNTING

Bespoke bunting at a bargain price

LIMITED EDITION

1 Got a lot of extra scraps from another project? Turn them into a new, limited-edition style.

BULK BUY

2 Buy pom-poms in bulk, ready to use on your made-to-order buntings.

We love THE ADDITION OF CHEERY POM-POMS TO A STANDARD BUNTING DESIGN, FOR A FUN AND FRESH EDGE

HOW TO MAKE THE POM-POM BUNTING

STEP 1 On the card, draw a triangle 17cm (6¾in) wide across the top and 18cm (7in) from top to tip. Cut this out to make a template. Use the template and fabric marker to draw as many pennants as you need on to the fabric. Cut out each one. Hand-sew individual pom-poms to the points of these pennants.

STEP 2 To trim the pennants, pin the pom-pom trim to the right side of one pennant piece. Position it with the braid edge less than 1cm (⅜in) in from the raw edge of the fabric, so that when the pennant is sewn with a 1cm (⅜in) seam allowance, only the pom-poms – no braid – will show. Tack the braid in place, then pin the other pennant piece on top, right sides together, matching all edges.

STEP 3 Next, set the sewing machine to a medium straight stitch and fit a zip foot. Taking a 1cm (⅜in) seam allowance, machine-sew down both sloping sides of each pennant, leaving the straight top edge open.

STEP 4 Trim the seam allowances and clip the point of each pennant. Turn each pennant right side out and press flat, being careful not to press the bobbles. You will find the end of a knitting needle useful for turning out the point. Set the sewing machine to a medium zigzag stitch and sew across the top of each pennant.

STEP 5 Following the manufacturer's instructions, thread the strip of straight-grain fabric through the tape maker and iron the folds into tape as they emerge. Then, press the tape in half lengthwise.

STEP 6 Slip the top edge of each pennant into the binding, spacing the pennants evenly. Pin each one in place. Cut very short pieces of braid with a single pom-pom on from the trim and slip them into the binding between some pennants. Pin them in place. Turn under and pin the ends of the binding to neaten them.

STEP 7 Set the sewing machine to a medium straight stitch. Starting at one end of the binding, machine along it close to the open edge, sewing over each pennant and piece of pom-pom braid and taking out the pins as you go. Press the bunting.

More sewing...

This beautiful beaded book cover makes a lovely gift
Turn to page 19

Who can resist this cheery little bluebird?
Turn to page 6

Personalise a basic bag and sell different versions
Turn to page 48

20 to Make Bunting & Pennants

by Kate Haxell
9781844486984
£4.99
Published by Search Press

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Crafty tales...

Three *Craftseller* readers tell us about their favourite selling experiences

BY RACHEL NOTT

Cat and her husband Rog found Melbourne a melting pot of creative talent, but discovered that wasn't the only thing melting...

→ Cat and Rog How from Bristol **Howkapow**

When we moved back to Bristol from London last year, my husband Rog and I wanted to create a colourful shop that would support and promote emerging designers and illustrators. We wanted to offer them a platform to showcase their work, often for the first time, and work together on something that supported creative people and built community.

The first spark of a business idea came when my husband Rog and I were selling my jewellery at the Rose Street Artist Market in Melbourne in 2006. There was such a strong sense of community that we wanted to do something like that ourselves when we got back to the UK. We also had a market stall in Brick Lane, London and similarly found some amazingly creative people who just needed a bit of a hand getting their work out there. We eventually realised that an online shop would be the best outlet to start.

"We had everything out in the lovely sunshine, but forgot that Aussies have super-hot Christmases..."

Melt-down moment

But it was while we were at the market in Melbourne that we had our first business slip-up. Rog's mum had taught him how to make bowls out of vinyl records when he was a kid, and they were hugely popular with the Aussies, especially at Christmas. We'd made loads, and had them all out on display in the brilliant sunshine. But, we forgot about the super-hot Christmases, until we noticed the bowls were flat – they'd started to melt back to their original states in the Melbourne heat! We frantically tried to rescue them but they were gone. Rog had to pace it back home to make more!

→ **Visit: www.howkapow.com**

→ Laura Thomson, from Stockport, UK **GingerBeer Designs**

Laura's first craft fair was a storming success, in spite of the washout weather

I've only been making things to sell since March this year, but it's going from strength to strength. I was a little nervous before selling at my first craft fair, but I had lots of stock and was trying to be confident, despite not knowing really what to expect.

Market day

I had my first market booked in for May, and was very excited – it was an outdoor event under marquee tents. All week the weather had been amazing and on the morning of the fair it was like tropical weather. I got to the location, got my table all set up ready (it looked lovely) then the heavens opened. I've never seen

"I was a little nervous before my first craft fair..."

→ Maya Wilson, from London
Maya Wilson Source

Expensive coffees were in danger of eating up Maya's hard-earned profits, but then a stroke of genius landed her a top sale

After 12 years working as a commercial artist in TV and publishing, in 2008 I decided to retrain as an interior decorator, which I found to be a natural lead into fabric design. I handprint my designs onto linen and cotton fabric, and am currently producing my designs as bespoke fabric to order as well as cushions and kitchen linens.

"Suddenly, I'm showing fabric samples and shaking hands!"

Marketing magic

Having recently started my business, I joined Craft Central and had a stand at their Made in Clerkenwell show. As part of my printed offerings I produced aprons with my 'Love Cats' design adorning the front. After three days of chatter and selling, meeting lots of interesting designers, swapping tips and spending our takings on expensive coffee, a joke was made that I should wear my apron when I go to buy coffee and try to get a sale. So off I went to the new, exceedingly cool coffee bar next door. Well, I think whoever suggested it to me must have been a clairvoyant as no sooner had I ordered the cheapest yet most expensive black coffee ever, the manageress was enquiring after my apron and whether I made bespoke! So, next thing you know I'm back in there later on showing fabric samples and shaking hands, all thanks to that spur-of-the-moment suggestion!

→ **Visit:** *mayawilson.co.uk*

rain like it – the tents started leaking so I had to keep moving my table around. But on the plus side people were sheltering from the rain next to my table and as a result I had lots of sales. Although, I had one very strange lady who stood next to my stand for a good 10 minutes and informed me that she didn't understand why anyone would want to buy fridge magnets, she couldn't stand felt, hates tea and doesn't care much for cake! (Yes, you've guessed it – I sell handmade fridge magnets, teapots and cupcakes made from felt and fabric!). Of course, the rain stopped just as I was packing up...

→ **Visit:** *folksy.com/shops/GingerBeer*

Tell us your story

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES OF BEING A CRAFT SELLER

Do you have a story to tell? If you're a craft seller and you've had real experiences trying to sell your work – experiences that have made you laugh, cry or both – then we want to hear about it.

1 Did you make an error while working on a product that gave it a different look to the one you intended, but you listed it online/put it on your craft stall anyway, only to find that it ended up flying off the shelves?

2 Have you had a tricky customer who is hard to please – even after you've pulled out all the stops?

3 Have you ever entrusted hubby/boyfriend/best friend to run your stall/look after your online business for a couple of days, and when you returned there were a few surprises in store?

GET IN TOUCH

Search for Craftseller on Facebook
lcraft@craft-seller.com

INFO BOX
Messenger bag
Time: 4 hours
Cost: £5
Size: 20 x 25.5cm (8 x 10in), 132cm (52in) strap

RATING *Moderate*

Grab & go...

Messenger bags are the ultimate mass-appeal accessory. Make these for anyone from students, to mums, to the 9-5 crowd so they can carry everything they need to get through the day

You will need

* 0.5 metres (½ yard) of fabric for the bag and strap
* 1 metre (1 yard) of contrasting fabric for the flap and pockets
* One matching zipper (optional), at least as wide as the purse – we used a 28cm (11in) zipper

FROM SEW WHAT! BAGS BY LEXIE BARNES, PUBLISHED BY IVY PRESS

BY LEXIE BARNES

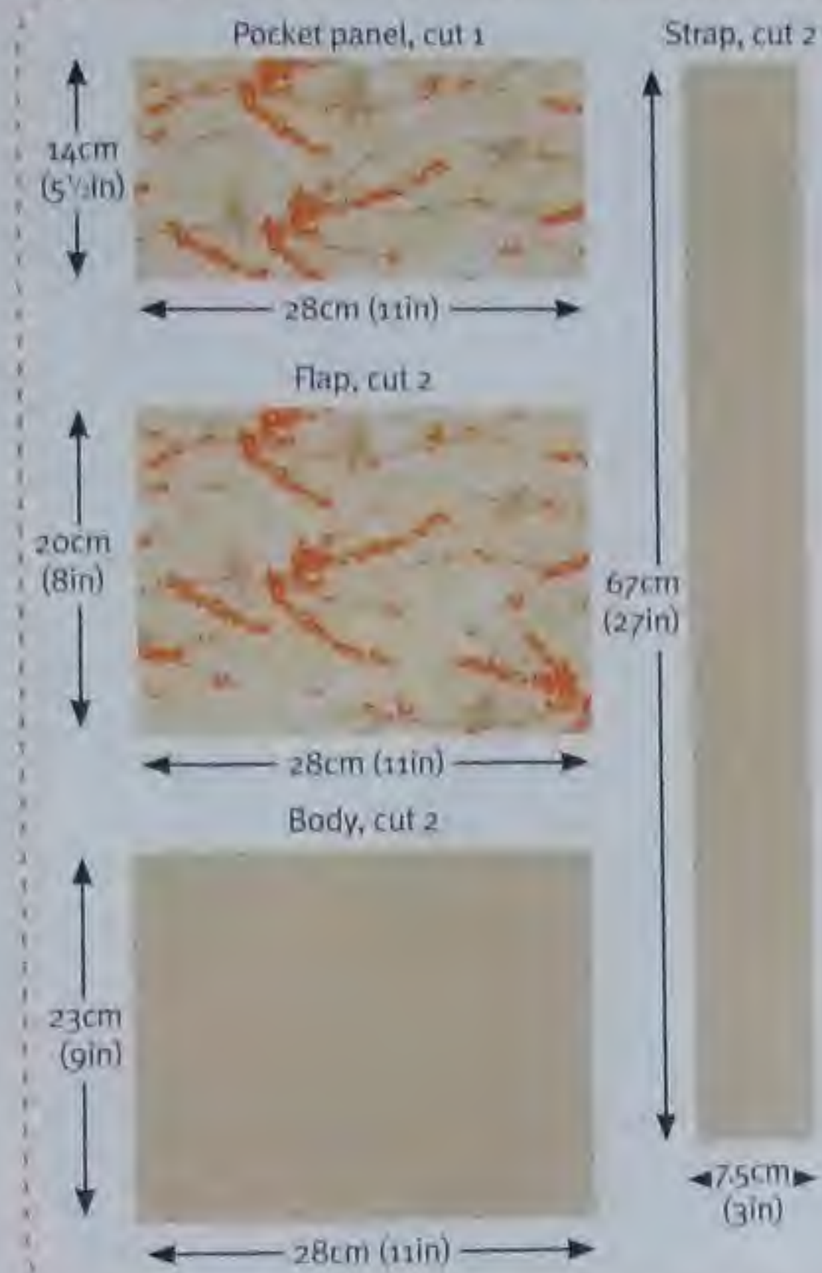
MAKE A MESSENGER BAG IN 7 EASY STEPS

Let your inner designer take over when you make messenger bags to sell from your shop. Everyone can use these over-the-shoulder wonders to tote their daily essentials, and our pattern is ideal for personalising. All you need is the right fabric – combine subtle prints and pastels, bold patterns with jewel-tone solids or go for a classic monochrome finish. We've given you lots of ideas here for different ways to finish your messenger bags, making sure you'll really have something for everyone.

to make...

a smaller version of this bag that's ideal to take travelling

Turn to page 52



1 First, measure and cut. Start by deciding your size. You can base the size of your purse on the pockets, the main compartment, or both. If you have a lot of little things in your bag that you need to keep track of, then start with the pockets. Pick the important items that you like to carry in your bag and lay them on top of the pocket fabric. Mark the pocket lines carefully and be sure to add a little ease (make the pockets a little wider than your gadgets, which is especially important if your gadget is not flat). If you are planning to carry something a bit bigger, like a notebook, then use it to determine the size of the bag first. You can add pockets to that and customise them as needed.

Make the bag to fit. If you plan to carry your bag on your shoulder, measure from the top of your shoulder to your hip. Double that number to determine the length of your strap. If you plan to carry your bag with the strap across your chest, add another 15-20cm (6-8in). It's always best to add yet another couple of inches for tweaking and attaching the strap. It's much easier to cut a strap shorter than to start over to make a longer one.

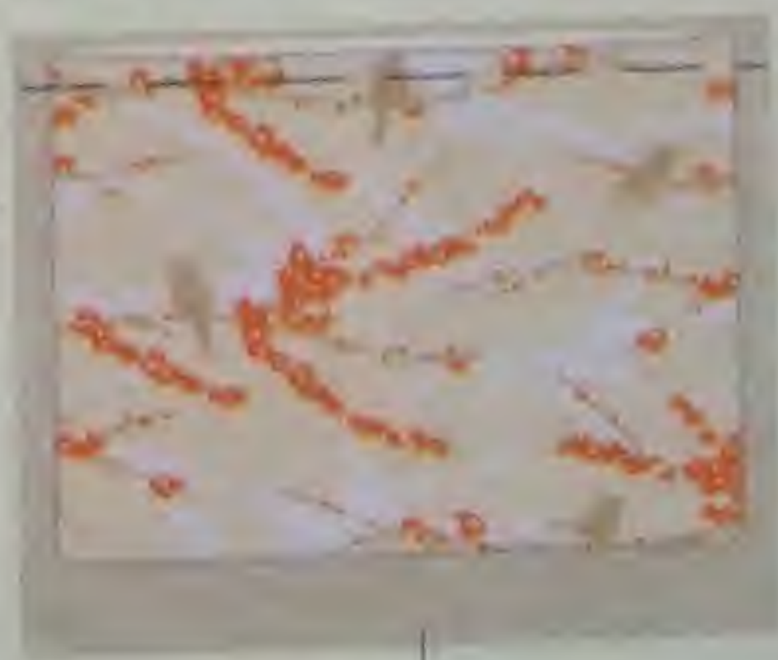
2 Cut your fabric. Measure and draw the bag pieces on the wrong side of the fabric, and cut out the following:

* **primary fabric:** two body pieces and two strap pieces
* **contrasting fabric:** one pocket panel and two flap pieces.

Now mark the pocket panel. Decide what you'll want to carry in the pocket panel and measure out slots for compartments on the right side of the fabric.

3 Now, put it together, starting with the pockets. Press under the top of the pocket 0.5cm (¼in), then press under another 0.5cm (¼in). Pin and edgestitch the bottom fold. With right sides facing up, pin the pocket to the front panel, lining up the raw edges. Stitch the compartments as desired and backtack at the top edges.

4 Make and attach the flap (optional). Pin the two flap pieces with right sides together, and stitch the sides and bottom. Clip the corners and trim the seam allowances. Turn the flap right side out, press, and with right sides together, baste the flap to the back bag panel (make sure you are basting the flap to the back of the purse, not the side with the pocket panel).

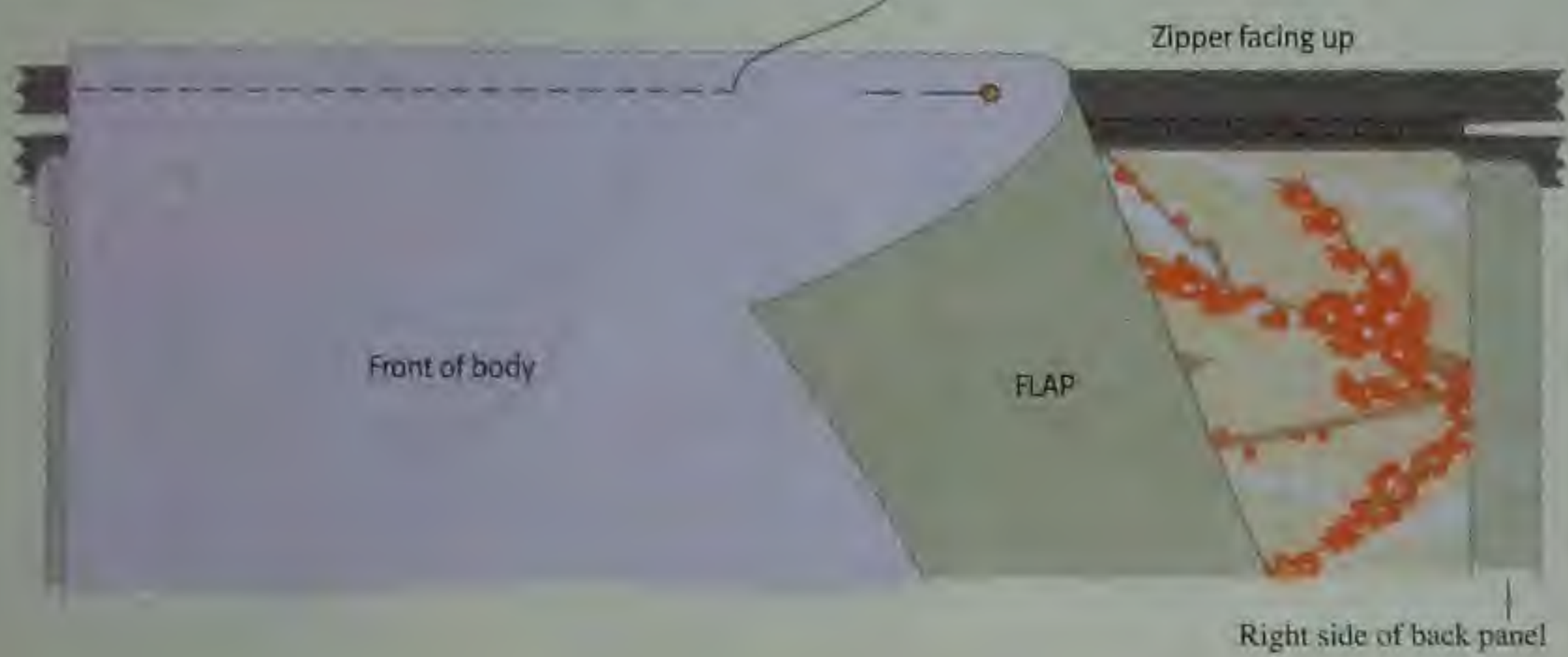


Right side of back panel

5 To attach the zipper (optional) follow instructions A and B.

A Place the closed zipper face down on the edge you just basted in step 4. Line up the edge of the zipper with the raw edge of the fabric, pin, and stitch. When you come to the zipper pull, stop stitching. Leave your needle in the fabric while you slide the zipper pull out of the way, and then continue stitching.

B To attach the front panel, turn the zipper up, away from the body of the bag, and press the bag away from the zipper. Lay the front of the bag face down on top of the zipper and align the top edges (this should not be the edge with the pocket panel). Pin and then stitch the top edge, as you did with the other side of the zipper. After stitching, flip the top layer away from the zipper to get a feel for how the bag is coming together. You should be able to see the zipper teeth at the top, and the attached flap. The sides and bottom of the bag have not been stitched yet.



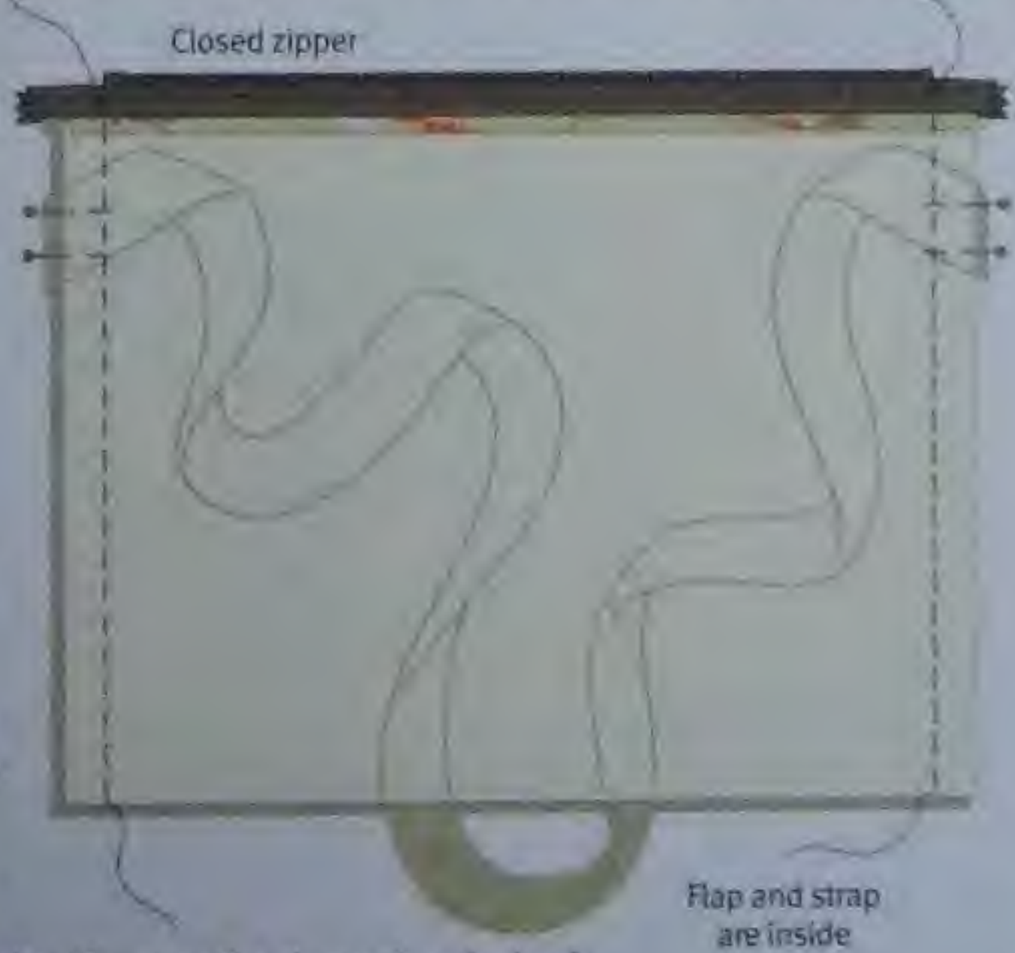
Unique selling point

Make your own versions of this bag that will appeal to students, professionals, mums, travellers, and more by adding pockets and style features for what each group will want to carry – iPods, passports, snacks, mobiles, books, water bottles, etc.

Say it with sewing

Add letters on the flap to spell out words or phrases, or to add the buyer's first name or initials. Get a commission for a set of bags for a sports team with the team name on the front.

6 Make and attach the strap. Stitch the short ends of two 69cm (27in) strips together to make one long 135cm (53in) strap. Fold the strip of fabric in half lengthwise, wrong sides together, and press along the fold. Each half will be 4cm (1½in) wide. Open up the strip and press each side under 1.5cm (½in). Refold the strip with the sides tucked in (wrong sides facing), and edgestitch along the length of both sides for greater strength.



Cut the ends of the strap at an angle. Pin the ends to each side edge of the front panel's right side, near the zipper. Lay the back of the bag on top with right sides together and the zipper closed. The strap and the flap should be tucked inside. Pin in place. Stitch up the sides of the bag and straps, going through the zipper, and backtack.

7 Stitch and join the bag. Open the zipper. Join the bottom of the bag and up both sides an inch or so for reinforcement, backtacking at the ends. Clip the corners and trim the seam allowance. You might also want to add a zigzag stitch to the seam edges to prevent fraying. Turn the bag right side out through the zipper opening, and press. Voilà – it's finished!

MAKE POCKETS MORE SECURE BY ADDING A ZIPPER

Sell MORE

Simplify your bespoke bag service

EMBELLISH

Make a pile of bags in plain, cheaper fabrics, and personalise them as needed with appliqué on the front flap – this saves you both time and money.

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Worried about choosing the right fabrics? Find a print that you like, and let that tell you what secondary colours to use. For the inside lining to the messenger bag, we used the brown you see in the bird and branches.

Options galore

Unzipped

If you want to make the bag without a zipper, just leave out step 5 on page 50. Instead, turn under the top edge of the bag 0.5cm (¼in) and press, then turn under another 0.5cm (¼in), press and stitch. Or, some daredevils might want to add a lining...

Unflappable

If you'd like to keep the zipper but lose the front flap, simply skip step 4 on page 49. You'll end up with a stylish zip-top bag that has even easier access to the front pockets.

Maximum security

Secure the front flap by adding a closure underneath it such as Velcro, some snaps, or a button and a buttonhole.

Customise

Changing the shape and pocket layout can turn a simple bag into a personal purse. A zippered side pouch adds an extra safety slot. It's all about the details – your details!

Facebook it!

Already have the perfect design in mind for this bag? We'd love to see it – post pictures on the *Craftseller* Facebook page, and tell us all about your latest sewing makes and creations.

Top tip

[illegible]

Book-shop

The messenger bag was extracted from *Sew What! Bags* by Lexie Barnes, published by Stoney Publishing. Readers can buy *Sew What! Bags* for the special price of £9.99 (rrp £11.99) plus free p&p in the UK mainland. To order a copy of the book, call 0207 372 1793 or email info@timberpress.co.uk, quoting offer code CS811. Offer ends 31 October 2011.

INFO BOX
Size: Adjustable
Time: 3 hours for a collection of beads
Cost: £2.50

Funky fashion

Make your own beads and ensure that your jewellery is always unique. Mix and match patterns and vary colours to stay on-trend.

Be Smart

Take photos of your jewellery and note which ones sell the best. Then try and replicate those designs, or create similar ones, when you make more sets to sell.

RATING *Moderate*

You will need

* Polymer clay in black and Sahara (beige)
* Large round bead roller set (optional)
* Pasta maker
* Necklace clasp and hook
* Polyblade
* Beading cord
* Stretch cord

BY LINDA PETERSON

There's no better way to dress up an old outfit than with new statement jewellery like this – the bold combination of intricate patterns stands out to show off your unique sense of chic. This necklace and bracelet look like they took days to make, but it's easy to recreate the look with baked polymer clay. Women will love buying these as special gifts for their mums and girlfriends, and you can cater to different fashion tastes by varying the colours and pattern combinations you include in each set.

Top tip

[illegible]

Top tip

LAYER TWO SHADES TO MAKE SPIRAL CANES. ROLL INTO A LOG, CUT INTO THIN SLICES AND APPLY TO BEADS

HOW TO MAKE SIMPLE CANES AND LOGS

1 Make black and Sahara (beige) base beads using the bead roller, or by hand. If you are going to cover the entire bead with patterned cane slices, use scrap clay for this step so nothing goes to waste.

2 Roll the beige clay into a log 0.5cm (¼in) thick and 7.5cm (3in) long. With a pasta machine (easier than by hand!) on the third thinnest setting roll a small sheet of black clay. Lay the beige log on the sheet and bend the sheet around to wrap the log, see step 1 below. Roll gently to secure.

3 Using the polyblade, carefully trim off the excess black clay where the ends of the sheet meet to neaten the ends of the strips.

4 Gently roll the cane back and forth, slightly stretching and elongating it until the log is 20cm (8in) long, see step 2. Using the polyblade, cut thin slices from the log, see step 3. Build a variety of different canes using black and Sahara. Experiment and create different patterns within each cane and cut thin slices from each log, ready to begin covering your beads.

Make beads & assemble

Apply cane slices over the surface of the beads. Roll gently to smooth each bead. If you're looking for inspiration, there are loads of online tutorials with amazing canes for you to try. Some are relatively quick and easy whilst others are very complicated. Simply search for 'polymer clay bead canes' to open up a whole world of creativity! To finish each of your beads, make holes using a toothpick, and bake until hard.

HOW TO MAKE THE NECKLACE

Decide on the length of necklace and triple this measurement to allow for the cord taken up by knotting. Create a loop in one end of the cord and knot. String on a bead, push it close to the knot, and then knot on the other side close to the bead. String on another and knot. Repeat until the necklace is complete. The last bead should slip through the loop made at the start and act as a fastener.

HOW TO MAKE THE BRACELET

For the bracelet, measure your wrist and add 5cm (2in). String the beads onto a length of stretch cord and knot the ends together to finish. Clip off the excess cord and hide the knot in one of the beads.

PUT SPOTS NEXT TO STRIPES TO CREATE CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE BEADS FOR THE BIGGEST IMPACT

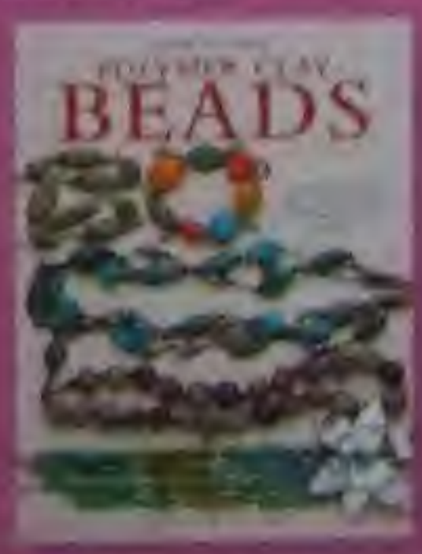
We love TO COMBINE PATTERNS AND USE DIFFERENT SHADES TO CREATE INDIVIDUAL BEADS. EVERY SINGLE ONE UNIQUE

GET ON TREND... AND MAKE SQUARE BEADS

Round beads are a simple shape to create, but you can make beads for bracelets and necklaces in lots of different shapes. Square beads are one of the easiest to make and are right on-trend, so teenagers will love to buy them. Create a log out of clay, press flat on four sides, slice off square beads and apply cane slices as you would on round beads.

Bookshop...

How to Make Polymer Clay Beads by Linda Peterson is published by CICO Books at £12.99 and available from all good bookshops or call 01256 302699 quoting GLX878 to purchase a copy at the special price of £10.99 inclusive of free p&p. Visit www.cicobooks.co.uk



Unique selling point
You control the size and shape of each bead, so vary that along with the colours to create individual jewellery every time.

Mix & match:
Make sets in various colours so people can buy sets for different outfits

On a budget:
You can make pretty patterns with whatever colour clays you have, so you don't have to buy any new clay – be creative with what you have.

Quick makes

Knit a colourful tea cosy in an afternoon and decorate with bright flowers
Turn to page 29

Make beautiful vintage-style covered buttons from leftover fabrics
Turn to page 10

Next page...

Find out how Linda Peterson began to sell jewellery for a profit →

Linda Peterson designs jewellery, and writes books about beading

BY LINDA PETERSON

If you're wondering, 'Who would buy my jewellery?' then be inspired by Linda Peterson's story...

HOW TO...

sell your jewellery

There's a huge difference between being creative and giving away your work, and being creative and selling your work. The difference is you: it's how you perceive yourself. Do you see yourself as a seller? Neither did I, at first...

MY JOURNEY INTO JEWELLERY

Way back in the early 2000s I was always sewing, doing decorative painting, and embellishing clothing. When my second child was born, I switched from embellishing my own clothes to embellishing and making baby clothes. However, when Mariah was about three months old, she became very sick and was diagnosed with a brain tumour. She wound up in the hospital for several months and, in order to keep my sanity, I continued to embellish baby clothes right there in her hospital room.

One day, a nurse walked in and asked if I could make something for her to take to a baby shower as a gift. I thought, "Wow, someone actually wants to pay me for what I'm making! What a huge compliment." I thought it was just a one-off, but word spread around the hospital and soon I was making and selling all sorts of things and adding to our income. My business grew into travelling to craft shows, selling wholesale, and finally to the design side of the business.

And to ease your mind about Mariah, she is now 18, cancer free, and creates right along with me. Sometimes I do think about all that I would have missed out on if Mariah had not become sick. Would something else have happened to cause me to sell my work? Perhaps, who knows? What I do know is that I love every minute of it and that it →

first proved a good way to make some extra income, and is now how I make my living – while still having a great time with my children.

GETTING STARTED

Let's focus on the basics. Two things you must have are access to a computer and a camera to take close-up photos. Take some good, clear pictures of everything you make and carry these in your handbag as a portfolio, just in case someone asks what you do or if you sell your work. I've even been known to sell the jewellery off my neck! Tell everyone you can about your new venture – be a shameless self-promoter.

BE UNIQUE

The next thing is to define your style and your jewellery niche. Where and who is your market? Check out the internet at home or at your local library. Search for 'how to sell your jewellery' or 'how to make money with your art'. Believe me, you will not be at a loss for information on this, and you can see what else is out there.

BE PROFESSIONAL

To look professional, you will need business cards. Several online sites will print cards at a reasonable cost, with templates that you can personalise with your contact information. A word of warning: you cannot control whose hands the cards fall into, so if you are working from home, you may wish to omit your address and simply use your email or phone number. Carry your cards with you at all times, giving them out like candy. Trust me, people do like to see what you have to offer, and remember that you are providing them with a time-saving service for all their gift-giving needs!

GOING ONLINE

To reach a wider audience, you need an online presence. If you are starting out on a budget like I did, first try blogging about your wares. You do not have to have amazing technical skills; it's as simple as having an email address and a password. There are several services like Blogger or Wordpress that allow you to create a free online blog; just find one that suits you. A blog is like writing in your journal, but on the web for others to read. Blogging sites are easy to update as often as you like: several times a day, daily, weekly. Use your blog to post pictures of your work. Those interested can easily subscribe to your blog and receive email updates when you write something new.

ETSY

You can sell from your blog, but if things go well you might want to set up an online store. This is easy with sites such as Etsy, a popular online marketplace that features handmade items. Setting up your store is free, but there is a minimal charge to place your items up for sale. Etsy also offers a free newsletter filled with excellent tips to promote yourself and your site. Another option is to join message boards and groups with common interests. Yahoo groups are popular and have loads of topics to choose from, or you can start your own. These groups offer a wealth of inspiration, education, and marketing opportunities – and you'll build great friendships, too.

TRY IT FOR YOURSELF

Inspired by what you read here? Try your hand at jewellery by making Linda Peterson's geometric black and white beads on page 54. You'll be amazed at how quick and easy this beautiful accessory is to recreate by following our helpful step-by-steps.

Next issue...

How to promote yourself online using Facebook and Twitter →

3 really useful jewellery essentials

BUILD UP YOUR STASH WITH THESE MUST-HAVES

Jump to it

Jewellery makers can never have too many jump rings! This huge box of assorted sizes (from 3mm to 9mm) is an absolute bargain, it contains approximately 1,500 jump rings so you can be sure you'll never run out. The silver plated ones are shown, and they're available in gold too.

Assorted box of silver plated jump rings, £4.99. *To order, call ☎ 01509 218 028 or visit www.beadsdirect.co.uk*

Sweetie shop

Kitsch jewellery is always on-trend for the young (and young-at-heart). This scrummy selection contains an assortment of colourful beads for you to make the sweetest accessories around. There are a selection of quantities available; jewellery addicts can order up to 5kg.

500g Kitsch Mix, £14.99.
To order, visit www.jilliansjewellery.co.uk

Sticky stuff

Struggling to fix a pretty bead onto a pendant or a ring? Invest in some silicone glue. This is the handiest adhesive around, and a must-have for all jewellery makers. It bonds to nearly any surface, dries clear and won't dissolve if it gets wet (ideal for forgetful folk who wear their jewellery when in the shower).

Silicone glue, around £3
From your local craft shop.

INFO BOX
Size: 13 x 13cm (4¾ x 5in)
Time: 2 hours
Cost: £2

RATING *Easy*

Love... geraniums

Make and sell perfect little gifts using our gorgeous floral collection

BY MARIA DIAZ

Beautifully detailed and easy to stitch, these colourful geraniums are guaranteed to brighten up your craft stall. We've given you 30 elegant designs to choose from, so you'll never be short of great stitching ideas to turn into top sellers. For instance, choose your three favourite designs, and frame them as we've done here for a fresh way to decorate a room. Or, make something slightly cheaper by mounting the motifs with card rather than framing them. The designs are easy to stitch and perfect to adapt any way you like – the only limit is your imagination.

You will need

THREADS
* Stranded cotton, as listed in the key

NEEDLES
* Size 24 needle

FABRIC
* A piece of 14-count white aida measuring at least 20 x 20cm (8 x 8in), to be cut as needed for each project

We love THE PRETTY BLEND OF PINKS AND REDS

MAKE THESE PRETTY GIFTS

1 Choose your motif and stitch onto aida fabric. Clean your stitching in lukewarm water with fabric detergent. Lay the piece face down on a towel, and press it gently with an iron.

2 Choose your frame. If you would like to include a mount, cut one yourself with the correct sized aperture, or get a mount cut professionally at a framers.

3 If you are using an adhesive-backed mount, centre the stitching in the aperture as you would with a card and trim the fabric to the same size as the mount. Peel off the backing and carefully press the mount over the stitching. Place it face down in the frame aperture, then replace the backing board and secure.

4 If you're not using the adhesive mount board, position and trim stitching in the same way, then put double-sided tape on back of mount board and edge of aperture. Press firmly over stitching, finish as before.

Geranium

CHOOSE A RUSTIC WOODEN FRAME TO SET OFF THE DELICATE LOOK OF THE GERANIUM

GERANIUMS KEY

Cross stitch in two strands

	DMC	Anchor	Madeira	Colour
◠	blanc	2	2402	white
♥	309	42	508	dark pink
●	335	38	506	pink
★	349	1098	212	dark red
☆	351	10	214	red
◊	352	9	303	light red
I	353	6	2313	coral
⅄	369	1043	1309	very light green
÷	402	1047	2307	light copper
▽	472	253	1414	lettuce green
A	644	830	1814	beige
∽	819	271	501	very light pink
⊙	917	89	706	dark magenta
■	986	246	1404	dark green
▣	988	243	1402	green
3	989	241	1401	light green
Z	3023	899	1813	stone grey
•	3607	87	708	magenta
♡	3716	25	503	light pink
W	3776	1048	2306	ginger
◙	3860	379	1913	brown

Backstitch in one strand

	DMC	Anchor	Madeira	Colour
—	154	873	2607	dark mauve
—	309	42	508	dark pink
—	472	253	1414	lettuce green
—	986	246	1404	dark green

French knots in one strand

	DMC	Anchor	Madeira	Colour
●	blanc	2	2402	white
●	309	42	508	dark pink
●	349	1098	212	dark red
●	352	9	303	light red
●	472	253	1414	lettuce green
●	819	271	501	very light pink
●	3607	87	708	magenta
●	3716	25	503	light pink

Maximum stitch count 65 high x 71 wide
Design area 14HPI (28-count evenweave) – 12 x 13cm (4½ x 5in)
These designs were stitched using DMC stranded cotton

Be unique

Use this motifs library to make endless gift ideas

VARIATIONS

Mount a motif in an oval aperture to make a pretty notebook for gardening tips, or choose a pastel card for a stylish greeting. Or, stitch a border onto an aida band, sew the ends together and slip around a pot of real geraniums.

STITCH SOLUTION
FRENCH KNOT FRENZY

French knots look great on cross stitch designs, but they can also be tricky to get right. Save yourself some of the hassle by sewing on beads instead, and a grit sparkly finish too.

Q&A

Need some help with a new technique? Can't make sense of business jargon? Our craft selling experts are here to help!

Starting up

Q Please can you tell me what legalities I need to go through to start a small wedding stationery company from home?
Sarah Mills, Islington

A **To set yourself up as a self-employed trader, you have to register with the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), for Income Tax and National Insurance purposes, at the end of your first day of self-employment. You can do this online, by phone or post. You should contact your local authority to see if you need to pay any business rates, or if they require you to have any licenses or permits for your type of work, as well as your mortgage lender or landlord. For more details, visit www.businesslink.gov.uk.**

Business Link

Postage problem

Q I upcycle all sorts of unloved homewares, and the heavier items cost a lot to post with the Royal Mail. Do you know if there are any ways to save here?
Nathalie Woods, Worthing

Save on next day delivery by sending your parcels via a company like Parcel Monkey

A **There are companies which buy in bulk the slots that premier couriers, such as DHL and Parcel Force, have been unable to sell on their vans and lorries. This means that they can offer a next day courier service, from your door to your customer's door, for around £5. Choose which service you want from a list of what's available, and book the whole thing online. Have a look at www.parcelmonkey.co.uk and also www.interparcel.com to find out more.**

CASH FROM CAKES

* If you're considering making foodie products to sell, contact your local Council for advice (www.direct.gov.uk). It's important to be safe when selling handmade goodies, and rules differ around the country. Starting a food business means you'll need advice on basic food hygiene and law, insurances, packaging, labelling and shelf life requirements that apply.

* Research food safety standards you'll have to meet, to keep on the right side of the law. Legislation says that all food businesses must register their kitchens with the local authority unless they operate on a 'casual and limited' basis. Baking a few biscuits once in a blue moon may fall into this category, but remember to check this out before you begin selling.

* If you're regularly selling food produce, you'll also need to take a course on food hygiene. You can do this over the internet, and it will cost you around £30.

* *You can also get advice from the Food Standards Agency site, www.food.gov.uk.*

ILLUMINATING GADGETS

TOP 3

Uplight

To speed up your stitching, tapestry or embroidering, invest in the Needlework Uplighter from Siesta Frames for £51.05. It will make it easy to see the weave of your fabric, and also prevent tired eyes.

On the go

If you have to craft on the go, or while you're away from home, take the ingenious Twist Portable Lamp (£47.99) from Daylight with you. It's just 30cm (11¾in) tall, and weighs under 1.5kg (3lbs).

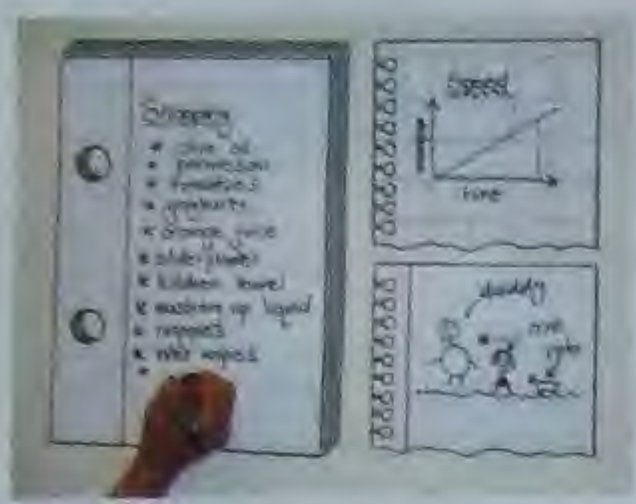
Seeing clearly

For fine, close-up work, PUREElite's 2-in-1 Illuminated Hands-Free Magnifier, £9.99, is essential. Straining to see what you are doing will take up valuable time, and could lead to mistakes.

Balancing act

Q I'm having trouble organising my time now that I'm working from home. Everyday things like housework get in the way – can you offer any advice?
Ginnie Atkins, Morecambe

A **There are a couple of potential solutions here – you have to find the one that works for you. Some people choose to work strict office hours, and don't let any housework creep into that time.**



Make sure work doesn't get in the way of life with a detailed daily schedule

Others prefer to assess things on a day-by-day basis, and organise their time accordingly, with a detailed schedule for each day.

Is Folksy for me?

Q I've heard Folksy is a good website to sell through – will it be suitable for my knitted children's toys? How can I get started?
Joanne Peters, Manchester

A Folksy would be an ideal place for you to sell your products – it is an excellent platform for showcasing crafts in the UK, including textiles. It's really easy to set up your own Folksy shop, too. You just have to go to www.folksy.com/selling, but read the FAQ section first if you are unsure about anything.

On a budget

Q I'm making lots of cross stitched and crocheted items for a charity sale, and I'd love to know ways to cut down on costs.
Grace Brassett, Barnsley

A Ask friends and family if they have any materials, patterns and charts going spare. Ask the same favour on relevant internet forums and Facebook groups, and see if local craft stores will let you put posters up. Think creatively, too – use different colours than the ones suggested to use up existing stash. Also, focus on small projects – the free kits that come with craft magazines, The *World of Cross Stitching*, are ideal – just make sure you avoid licensed and copyrighted characters.

QuickQ&A...

Q How can I find out about craft fairs near me?
Yvonne Slater, Truro

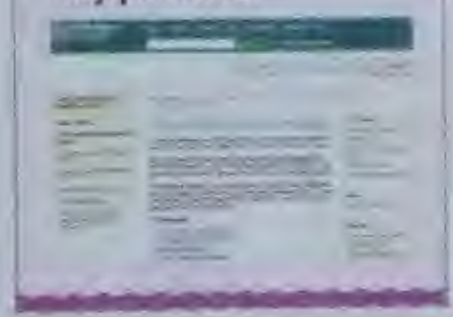
A Have a look at www.craftcalendar.co.uk, www.craft-fair.co.uk and, for your part of the world, www.cornwallcalendar.co.uk – they all list upcoming fairs and who to contact.

Q I always get my receipts mixed up with the ones I don't need to keep! Do you have any tips?
Sophie Johnson, Edinburgh

A Make yourself a little wallet – keep it in your handbag, and put relevant receipts in it straight away.

Q I'm just thinking about starting my own company – please can you explain VAT for me?
Emma Pond, Slough

A Value Added Tax is a 20% charge that is placed on most sold goods – making sure you pay your VAT is essential. For details, visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/vat and read the article called 'VAT accounting schemes: the basics' for some key pointers.



Guest EXPERTS

Sophie Cornish and Holly Tucker, founders of Notonthehighstreet.com

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Finding the right name for your company should be a fun task. It needs serious consideration though, as the wrong name can impede your growth or even damage your brand.

You must be confident that your chosen name will work well in a range of formats. It needs to sound good, look good, and have strong potential for a logo. It also needs to fully represent your brand, so before you choose a name be sure to define a clear position and goal for your company. The name needs to reflect the style and purpose of your business or even directly tell the customer these things – like notonthehighstreet.com

Your own name or initials might be fitting if you offer a bespoke service. Some people say that you should avoid a name that's too long, but we've found that hasn't been a problem for us; if anything, it's an advantage! If the name is clear and memorable, you shouldn't have any issues.

One crucial aspect is securing the web domain for your chosen trading name, and then using it properly. Even if you don't plan to sell via the internet, potential customers will expect to see a professional website if they search online for your company, which most customers do.

You can also visit the website www.businesslink.gov.uk and use the 'Company name and trademark checker' on there to see if any other businesses already exist with the name you'd like to use.

Ahead of the trend

Q Where can I look for new product ideas, and find out what kinds of things are going to be popular in advance?
Pamela Lamb, Norwich

A First, know your market and the kinds of things they'd want. Read craft, lifestyle and homes magazines and look at the things that are popular on notonthehighstreet.com, etsy.com and folksy.com. Plus, keep reading *Craftseller* for great tips and hints about what's going to sell well.

Look at the latest issues of craft, fashion, home décor magazines, such as *BBC Homes & Antiques*, for fresh ideas

Got a bright idea about one of the queries here? Write in and tell us!

Have a question about something you're selling? Ask our experts!

Our Craftseller experts can help you sort out your crafty conundrum

WWW.HERMIONEHARBUTT.CO.UK

Show off your crafts in an aspirational way – let the setting create a mood

Perfect pictures

Q *How can I improve the photographs of my jewellery?*
Hollie Thomas, Bridgend

A **Always shoot in good light, and use a tripod to ensure perfectly crisp shots. For the highest-quality images, it's best to employ a professional. Approach students at a local art college as they may be willing to work for free, or for a lower price. Also, plan your setting – for example, hang earrings off a cocktail glass for an elegant feel.**

'TIS THE SEASON?

Q *When should I start to add Christmas stuff to my product range?*
Olivia Redcar, Lincoln

A **Most mainstream shops get serious levels of Christmas stock in during September and October, and this is a great time to do research into what is going to be popular. Aim to have stock ready for sale in October and November. See our feature on p66 for more tips.**

Top TIPS... *Marketing & promotion*

1 Email craft magazines with details and photographs of new designs as soon as you have them ready to sell.

2 Make sure you have Facebook and Twitter buttons displayed on your website – that way, your customers can do the promotion for you.

3 Always provide excellent customer service – people will talk positively about you, and word will spread.

4 Get involved with charity events – you can showcase your products to a wide range of potential customers.

5 Have you got a USP (unique selling point)? If not, come up with one, and work it into a tagline – it will make your business more memorable.

6 Giveaways in relevant magazines and on websites are a great way to promote your business, and mean to get people to try out your products.

7 To make the most of Google, learn about Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).

8 Attend local craft shows – if your company is very small, find another crafter who would be happy to share a stall with you and split the costs.

9 Consider advertising in a local newspaper or magazine – start with a phone call or email to the directory sales team.

10 As craft fairs offer a discount in exchange for people's email addresses – then you can send newsletters to a broad selection of customers.

Crafting whizz

Kate Hamilton-Hunter, www.katehh.co.uk

While studying textiles, Kate Hamilton Hunter discovered a way to use old tins to create gorgeous, contemporary jewellery. "Essentially, we dismantle the tins and cut shapes out of the flat metal – hammer it, saw it, drill it, shape it and assemble it into a lovely piece of jewellery," explains Kate. And, her upcycled designs have proven to be very popular with customers. "The whole concept of what we do – using old biscuit tins to make jewellery – makes people smile," she tells us. Now working with a staff of eight, Kate's company is going from strength to strength. "When I see it all coming together in my studio, I have a huge grin on my face," she says.

Safety first

Q *What health and safety requirements do I need to fulfill to open a cupcake business from home?*
Michelle Fillion, Cheltenham

A **At least a month before you start your business, you need to register with the Environmental Health Service at your local authority – they will inspect your property. Download a guide about food hygiene standards from www.businesslink.gov.uk in advance to make sure you know the requirements. You should also pick up *Starting a Cake Decoration Business from Home* by Kathy Moore. It includes advice for cake-specific businesses, as well as details on the latest legislation. It's available from www.squires-shop.com for £12.99.**

Cost-effective

Q *I've got festive scented candles lined up for Christmas, but some of the ingredients are much expensive – is it ok to charge more for them?*
Vivian Holliday, Cambridge

A **While people are usually happy to pay more for a special gift item, they may feel a little cheated if other items appear the same but cost less. So, market them as a luxury version of your normal product – give them more festive packaging, or finish them with some glitter or metallic leaf.**

Get ready for Christmas!

The festive period may seem like months away, but in the crafting world, now's the time to get your Christmas groove on. We look at ways you can get your craft business ready for the seasonal surge

Lucy Ward, from Shropshire
The Whistling Cowgirl

BY VERITY GOUGH

Ask any crafter what they are doing in August, and chances are they'll be up to their eyes in Christmas stock. And while it may seem like madness to be worried about not having enough Santa decorations in the midst of the summer heat, the reality is that the festive season is by far and away the busiest time for anyone in the gift-making business.

CHRISTMAS? BUT IT'S SUMMER!

Forget jetting off on holiday and think 'preparation' rather than 'vacation'. "We start thinking about Christmas stock in July," explains Liz Fennings, the Bristol-based creator of online vintage-inspired jewellery store, Elsie Belle. "We've found that we need to start getting organised very early to keep up with the demand." And she's not alone.

Liz Fennings, from Bristol
Elsie Belle

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR HER

Lockets are such great pressies for mums, sisters, best friends or girlfriends. You can add a personal photograph or picture, a little note or a memento to really make the gift personal and extra special. Elsie Belle does a beautiful range of such things – visit www.elsiebelle.com to see them for yourself.

10 top tips for organising yourself

1 Start early! It may feel strange organising Christmas supplies and ideas in July, but by September there just won't be enough time.

2 Write it all down. To-do lists are a must, but should be realistic and spread evenly to reduce stress.

3 Order more than you think you will need. It's better to have leftover stock than run out and not be able to fulfil customer orders.

4 Organise packaging materials and any little extra touches well in advance.

5 It's a good idea to keep your Christmas stock separate from everything else, so you can keep track of how much you have made.

6 Ask shops that stock your products to get their Christmas orders in as early as possible, and have extra stock ready to send if it's required last minute.

7 Make sure you know what the postage deadlines are.

8 Choose craft fairs that look well-organised, or you have visited in the past and loved – if you like them, your customers probably will too.

9 Tweet, blog and update your Facebook page before, during and after craft fairs to keep customers interested, and create a buzz around your stand and products.

10 Take lots of literature and business cards with you so customers can follow up afterwards if they want to.

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR KIDS

Even kids are getting into the 'Make Do and Mend' spirit these days. Why not get them their own craft kit so they can sew, make or even bake something themselves, and learn vaulable skills in the process? The mini craft kits from The Whistling Cowgirl (www.thewhistlingcowgirl.co.uk) are just the thing.

Most crafters turn their thoughts to all things festive as early as spring, while others plan for Christmas all year long.

Gemma Manning-Bentley set up Gemmipop Designs two years ago, and now has a permanent stall at Oswestry indoor market in Shropshire. She has Christmas commissions for personalised jewellery coming in thick and fast already. "Not having enough hours in the day is a massive issue for most crafters, so organisation is key. Not only do the designs have to be done, you need enough time to actually make things," she explains.

WHAT TO MAKE?

The trick to knowing what's hot in your own particular market is to recognise a trend and capitalise on it. Lucy Ward, an illustrator and crafter who sells her gifts, toys and accessories both in the UK and internationally under the name The Whistling Cowgirl gives a great example of how to maximise the potential in a trend. "Crafting is so popular now that this year I'm putting together some mini craft kits, as they make quirky little presents," she explains. She advises keeping an eye on what's selling throughout the year as a barometer of what will be popular as Christmas gifts, and follow other craft blogs and sites like Etsy to see what's hot as well as reading interior and fashion magazines.

With vintage items still holding their own in the popularity stakes, crafters who are able to mix modern design with older pieces will certainly hit the mark. "Vintage trinkets and unusual charm necklaces are still very on-trend," says Liz. "Items that are good sellers at other fairs and markets as well as pieces that the press are regularly featuring are always going to be worth making in time for the Christmas season."

Personalisation is still big business, so think commercially and consider offering to customise. But do remember postage deadlines if you plan on sending things in December.

HOW MANY?

Ok, so you've got your ideas, now what? Gauging the right amount of stock to make is really a case of trial and error. Lucy warns that planning stock for market stalls can be particularly tricky. "Outdoor events can be wildly unpredictable in terms of the weather," she explains. "Last year my final two markets of the year were held in persistent snow so they were much quieter than the same two events the year before. But excess stock quickly went into shops that sell my products – to make the most of last-minute shoppers – so that nothing I made went to waste."

"It's all based on guess work," agrees Liz. "A few years ago our Giddy Up horse's head necklace was featured in *Fabulous* magazine's Christmas gift guide, and sales went through the roof – we didn't know that it was due to be featured, and we had to work day and night to keep up with the demand." After such a steep learning curve, she now prioritises Christmas stock based on the year's consistent best sellers, items in trend, plus any products due to be featured in the press as a starting point and plans stock accordingly.

This 'waste-not want-not' ethos can be applied to leftover stock, too. "I only make a certain amount of Christmas-themed fabric items, so any leftover stock can be put into a January sale or stored for the next year," adds Lucy.

> **"Craft fairs are a great way to get feedback, and see what pieces are the most popular"**
>
> Liz Fennings, Elsie Belle

SELL YOURSELF!

One of the best places to market is at the Christmas craft fair. They can bring in larger sums of money, and provide the perfect chance to meet customers face-to-face. "They are a great way to get feedback and see what pieces are the most popular," adds Liz. She suggests organising little extras like a lucky dip or free sweets – a personal touch not found on the high street.

However, Lucy recommends booking fairs alongside selling online and in shops. "It's a numbers game; the more selling avenues you explore, the more money you are likely to make, so try as much as you can cope with." And one of the most cost-effective marketing routes is social media. Twitter and Facebook are great for letting customers know where you will be, as well as running special giveaways.

"I use Twitter and Facebook regularly to keep my customers up-to-date with what I've been doing on the stall, so they know when I've launched a new range," says Gemma. Lucy ups her Twitter usage before Christmas, fills up her Etsy and Folksy stores, and keeps her website current with news.

There's no doubt that the trend for hand-made is a huge bonus for crafters looking to sell this holiday season, and with a little careful planning and a lot of hard work, you can make sure yours is a very merry Christmas!

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR HIM

It's always tricky, but personalisation is big business. Sellers and customers alike know that something thoughtful and related to a recipient's own interests will always be appreciated. Customised artwork, or even a retro knitted jumper featuring your boyfriend/dad/brother's favourite saying or slogan are winners. Have a look at Gemma's quirky personalised cufflinks at www.gemmipopdesigns.com.

→ Gemma Manning-Bentley, *from Shropshire* **Gemmipop Designs**

Diary of a Craft Seller

Etsy seller Shona Graham spends all day every day doing th
craft she loves. Here, she reveals what a typical week is like.

Monday

Monday

I couldn't ask for a better start to my week – I'm going shopping for materials to use for my latest collection. For as long as I can remember, I've been a bit of a magpie, collecting all sorts of shiny bits and bobs. My jewellery is made from vintage pieces, so I head to local charity shops and a flea market. I love eBay too, so once I get home I relax on the sofa with my laptop and browse the site.

Tuesday

Today I'm working in my studio, or the Aladdin's Cave as my friends call it. I can't resist digging out my new mini teapots. Later, I pop the kettle on and while I wait I decide 'Fancy a cuppa' is a pretty apt name for my new design. I start to sketch a few designs, but my creative inspiration isn't flowing so I take a wander to the Bristol Museum & Art Gallery near where I live. There are so many beautiful trinkets, and I can also people-watch, soaking up the latest fashion trends.

Wednesday

Today I put my photography degree to good use to shoot the new products. I picked up some beautiful fabric, wrapping paper and vintage postcards earlier in the week, so I prop my shots with these. My friend Claire pops in mid-shoot, and I'm relieved to have an extra pair of hands to help. She loves the new pieces too – although some might say she's slightly biased.

Thursday

Today I put my creative skills to one side, and put my businesswoman head on. I upload the pictures and descriptions of the new necklaces onto Etsy, and keep my fingers firmly crossed. I've set up Sho Time Charms on Facebook and Twitter too, so I let everyone know that there are new pieces available to buy on Etsy. Hopefully the orders will come flooding in.

Friday

I check my Etsy account first thing and I'm delighted to find two orders, one from Australia and the other from America. Etsy is popular all over the world, so I get orders from everywhere you can think of. I gift-wrap the pieces and then pop to the post office to send them on their way. On my way back, I can't help but daydream about these two ladies on opposite sides of the world wearing jewellery that I've made.

Saturday

I'm running a Sho Time Charms stall at a vintage fair in Bristol today. Most of my jewellery is sold through Etsy, but I think markets are an important alternative to the high street, so I attend as many as I can. It's packed with people and I get lots of feedback from happy customers, and I chat to local designers. As I walk home in the beautiful sunshine, I spy a girl wearing one of my necklaces. It's a great feeling – I wouldn't change my job for anything in the world.

Sunday

Sunday is dream time day and an opportunity to recharge my batteries so I'm ready for the week ahead...

'I spy a girl wearing one of my necklaces – it's such a great feeling'

Find out more...

To view Silvana's gorgeous range of jewellery, visit her shop at

HOW TO...

price your work

Don't know how much to charge for your handmade masterpiece? Craft business expert Kari Chapin has some essential advice...

BY KARI CHAPIN

How much is that handmade dog bed in the window? Pricing your work can be a challenge, and there are many different schools of thought on the best way of going about it. The bottom line (pardon the pun) is to ask for whatever you're comfortable with. If it takes you only 30 minutes to wood-burn a sign for someone's house, and you feel that it's worth £300 ($900), that's what you should charge. Or if £30 ($90) feels right, go for that. In the end, you need to make the money you want to make, and you can make sure that happens by charging what you're happiest with. But that comfort-level figure can seem awfully elusive.

Kari Chapin is an author and craft enthusiast with a head for business

How the public determines value, what your competitors charge, and your costs are a few deciding factors. There's a lot more to it, of course, but we'll start there for now. First of all, how do we determine the value of a product? I'll use a painting as an example. You are an amazing painter, right? You know that you can sell a large painting for £300 ($900), and prints of the same paintings go for £25 ($75). You then discover that another painter has priced her work for a lot more, but when you raise your prices, your work doesn't sell. Why?

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

Part of it could be the perceived value of your work. The other artist may be able to command a higher price because she has been around a lot longer than you and has a larger audience. She may have shown her

work in galleries across the country, and because she is more well-known, people expect and are willing to pay more for her work. Even if you both paint vivid landscapes that bring a tear to the viewer's eye, her work is deemed more valuable based on factors like reputation, a CV featuring various galleries, or even a lot of good press. The public is willing to pay more because they feel they are getting more, even if the actual work is similar.

But, it's not only having an established name that can raise the perceived value of your work. If you create knitted goods, you can explain that your work is worth the money you're asking by talking up your process and materials. If you use only the best organic wool, dye and spin it yourself, then knit an original design, those elements could raise the value of your work in your customer's eyes. Let people know why your work is valuable, and how much you put into what you make.

COST COMPARISON

Get a good idea of your perceived value by checking out your competition and comparing your work with others' work. Say you're a maker of dog beds. Look at sizes, and see how they compare to yours in price. Or, find manufacturers that use the same types of materials as you, or have the same look and feel. Also, look for products that have something in common with yours but aren't too similar – all dog beds, big and small and in between. See what they are selling for, how many have been sold (if you can figure that out), and how they're described. Read the feedback, and see what customers like or dislike about them.

THE 2.5 FORMULA

Now that you have a base cost for your product, you need to decide how much to mark it up for retailing. Let's say you determine that a fabric wallet costs you £3 ($5) to make. That a fiver covers your materials, your labour, and the basic costs of being in business. One formula you could use is a 2.5 formula: multiply your base cost by 2.5, and consider that your retail price. Multiplying £3 ($5) by 2.5 is £7.70 ($12.50); the first £3 ($5) reimburses you for making the wallet, the second £3 ($5) is enough money to make another wallet and keep your business going, and the £1.50 ($2.50) could go towards developing another product, like a matching business card holder.

Now look at the market. When you find items like yours, how are they priced? If you find that wallets of a similar size and style are also priced at £7.70 ($12.50), you might want to drop your price a dollar or two to make them competitive. If your wallets feature something really unusual and stand out from the pack, you might want to raise your price.

RETAILERS' RATE

Something else to figure out is your wholesale price for doing business with retailers – more than the base cost, but less than the retail price. So, you'll want to sell your wallets to retailers for more than £3 ($5) and less than £7.70 ($12.50). You'll get less money than if you sell them yourself, but in return, someone else is now advertising and selling your wallets – leaving you free to create and make more! This is just one method to figure out pricing; talk to your crafty community for more ideas.

Check out the competition

Use the list of questions below to make sure your product is priced appropriately. Perhaps you'll find you are underpricing your goods, or maybe your sales are slow because a similar product out there sells for a lot less than yours does. Studying up on the competition in your market can help you decide the best price for what you make.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

When you're studying up on the competition, ask yourself the following:

* What do my product and this one have in common
* What sets mine apart? How is mine unique? Better? Worse?
* If I were a buyer comparing this other product with my own, what would strike me as the primary differences? What would be the choices I'd need to make between the two before I spent any money?
* What can my competitor's feedback tell me about my own product?

Explain that your work is worth the money you're asking customers to pay

What does the product cost you?

Knowing how much your product costs you to make and sell is essential in determining retail price. This includes everything that goes into what you make. For example, the cost of making a fabric wallet can be broken down in several ways, depending on how you source your supplies. These are:

Materials to construct the wallet, including:

* Fabric (includes delivery cost)
* Snaps
* Thread
* Interfacing
* Label (of your company name)

Selling costs for your wallet, including:

* Listing/advertising costs
* Online banking fees
* Shipping tissue paper, sealing stickers, etc.
* Padded envelope or mailing box
* Postage

Note that this list does not include your time – this not only means the actual crafting time, but also the time you spent sourcing the supplies, the time you spent driving to the post office to mail it, and the time you spent uploading the article to your store. You must determine what you think your hourly worth is, and add that to your selling price.

Find out more...

For more information, visit Kari's website at www.karichapin.com. *The Handmade Marketplace* is available through Amazon and all good book shops, RRP £11.99.

Get this as a gift when you subscribe on

INFO BOX
Height: 35cm (14in)
Time: 5-6 hours
Cost: under £5

Flower pencil pot

Who says desk décor can't be practical too? This pretty crocheted vase holds handy, flower-topped pencils – a fun gift for any working woman...

RATING *Moderate*

BY GINA ALTON

You will need

* Approximately 100g cotton DK yarn in blue (such as Patons 100% Cotton DK)
* Approximately 25g DK yarns each in yellow, white and green (such as Patons Diploma Gold DK)
* 2 large handfuls of yarn oddments in blue, for stuffing
* 4mm (UK size 8, US size G/6) crochet hook
* 3mm (UK size 11) crochet hook
* 3 pencils or pens
* Tins & safety tin opener
* Darning needle

Whether at home or the office, our desk is not usually a place we think too much about making pretty. But with the amount of time we spend there, why not add some personal touches to create a more pleasant workspace? Start with this flower pencil pot – not only is it a fun and unique desk accessory, but the daisy-topped pencils guarantee that you'll never lose one again. An original gift as well as a fab accessory, this is one item that's sure to pique your customers' interest.

Abbreviations

Ch: chain
Dc: double crochet
Dc2inc: work 2dc into same loop to increase a st
Dc2tog: dc 2sts together
Floop: foundation loop
Rem: remaining
Rep: repeat
Ss: slip stitch
St/sts stitch, stitches
WS: wrong side

Guide to tension

Work first 7 rounds of inner base, then work even for 6 rounds. The piece should fit comfortably inside the tin without being too bulky. Use a larger or smaller hook if necessary.

Pattern notes

The stitched white spiral on the pencil pot could be worked prior to placing the tin into the outer sleeve for stuffing and joining, but take care not to pull the stitches too tight as the blue fabric needs to retain its elasticity so the stuffing is able to fill out the curvy vase shape.

Note on safety

It is important to ensure that the opened edge of the can is smooth, not sharp. A safety can opener, which bevels the edge automatically as the can is opened, is the ideal tool, or you could substitute the tin can for a sturdy plastic cup.

HOW TO MAKE THE PENCIL POT

Method

Both the inner and outer sleeve of the pot are worked in spiral rounds throughout. The inner piece is worked first, from the centre of the base outwards and then upwards for the sides. The outer sleeve begins in the same fashion, albeit with an extra round of increases at the base in order to fit around the outside of the tin. Increase rounds begin the shaping for the vase, then decrease rounds bring the fabric in again at the neck. The inner sleeve is placed inside the tin, then the tin is put inside the outer sleeve and handfuls of yarn used to fill the convex middle area of the outer vase. The inner and outer sleeves are then joined by double crocheting the two pieces together. Further increase rounds result in the frill at the top. To finish, stitches in white are worked in a loose spiral for decoration.

The yellow flower centre is worked as two pieces (front and back) joined together and stuffed with a little matching yarn. White is joined in, a row of slip stitch work to transition to the new colour and then the petals worked over two rounds.

CROCHET A FEW INCREASE ROUNDS TO MAKE THE WIDE FRILL AT THE NECK

We love THE UNIQUE TAKE ON A STANDARD PENCIL POT

Note

Both inner and outer pieces are worked in dc spiral throughout (without joins between rounds).

Inner sleeve base

With 4mm hook and blue yarn, make foundation loop and 1ch.
Round 1 – 6dc into floop. 6 sts
Round 2 – (Dc2inc) 6 times. 12 sts
Round 3 – (1dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 18 sts
Round 4 – (2dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 24 sts
Round 5 – (3dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 30 sts
Round 6 – (4dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 36 sts
Round 7 – (5dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 42 sts

Inner sleeve sides

Work even in dc rounds until piece is long enough to reach about 2.5cm (1in) above top of tin when sleeve is placed inside.
Ss to finish, then fasten off.

Outer sleeve base

With 4mm hook and blue yarn, make floop and 1ch.
Round 1 – 6dc into floop. 6 sts
Round 2 – (Dc2inc) 6 times. 12 sts
Round 3 – (1dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 18 sts
Round 4 – (2dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 24 sts
Round 5 – (3dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 30 sts
Round 6 – (4dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 36 sts
Round 7 – (5dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 42 sts
Round 8 – (6dc, dc2inc) 6 times. 48 sts

Outer sleeve sides

Rounds 9-14 – Work even in dc.
Round 15 – (7dc, dc2inc) to end. 54 sts
Round 16 – (8dc, dc2inc) to end. 60 sts
Round 17 – Work even in dc.
Round 18 – (9dc, dc2inc) to end. 66 sts
Round 19 – (10dc, dc2inc) to end. 72 sts
Rounds 20-25 – Work even in dc.
Round 26 – (10dc, dc2tog) to end. 66 sts
Round 27 – (9dc, dc2tog) to end. 60 sts
Rounds 28-29 – Work even in dc.
Round 30 – (8dc, dc2tog) to end. 54 sts
Round 31 – (7dc, dc2tog) to end. 48 sts
Round 32 – Work even in dc.
Round 33 – (6dc, dc2tog) to end. 42 sts
Rounds 34-35 – Work even in dc.
Do not fasten off the yarn. →

Bookshop...

Readers can buy *Pots to Knit and Crochet* for the special price of £7 (rrp £9.99) plus p&p (£2.95 for the first item and £1.95 for each additional item). Call 01273 488005 or visit www.thegmcgroup.com, quoting code R2860 at the check out. Offer ends 30 November 2011.

Be unique

Include an extra set of pencil toppers in a different colour when you sell your pencil pots, so the 'bouquet' can be changed often.

Top tip

NEW TO CROCHET? TRY THE INCREASE AND DECREASE STITCHES WITH SPARE YARN FIRST

Fitting inner and outer sleeves to pot

Turn inner sleeve inside out (WS facing outwards, so that the right side is seen from the inside) and ease it into the tin so that the base reaches the bottom and the sides conform to the contours of the tin. Next, place the tin can inside the outer sleeve and stuff the middle section evenly. This might take time and you might find that cutting the handfuls of yarn into shorter lengths can make it easier to distribute the stuffing yarn evenly.

Join inner and outer sleeves

Pick up the loop left after the end of round 35 which was not fastened off.
Round 1 – Dc the two pieces together by working each dc of this round into both the next stitch from the outer sleeve and the corresponding stitch from the inner sleeve. 42 sts
Round 2 – (2dc, dc2inc) to end. 56 sts
Round 3 – (3dc, dc2inc) to end. 70 sts
Round 4 – (4dc, dc2inc) to end. 84 sts
Work 2dc, then ss to finish.
Fasten off.

Contrast stitching

Using a darning needle and a long length of white yarn, work a spiral of running stitches around the vase along every third row until you have about eight rounds of white, as shown here. Now, work a second layer of stitching by working around each 'float' of the first spiral. If you need to join in a new length of yarn, just knot the end of one piece to the beginning of another and use the darning needle to pull the ends through to the inside of the fabric/stuffing.

facebook

Proud of your pencil pot and daisy toppers? Show them off on our Craftseller Facebook page

HOW TO MAKE THE DAISY PENCIL TOPPERS

Tip

Either make three flowers alike, or make each daisy unique by experimenting with stitch numbers and types. Before starting, wind off about 8in (20cm) of yellow yarn to use for stuffing the centre later.

Flower centre (front)

Work throughout in dc rounds with no joins between rounds.
With 3mm hook and yellow yarn, make floop and 1ch.
Round 1 – 6dc into floop. 6 sts
Round 2 – (Dc2inc) 6 times. 12 sts
Rounds 3-4 – Work even in dc.
Work ss to finish, then fasten off.

Joining flower centres (back and front)

Work one round of slip stitch all around, working into the next stitch of the back as well as the corresponding stitch of the front with every ss, stuffing with the length of yarn wound off earlier just before closing. 14 sts
Fasten off.

Petals

Round 1 – With 3mm hook and with flower centre front facing you, join white yarn with a slip stitch and work one round loosely into the joining round just worked in yellow. 14 sts.
Round 2 – *Work 1ss into next st, make 8ch, (skip 1ch, 1dc into each of the rem 7 ch sts), then 1ss into st at base of the 8ch. Rep from * to end. 14 petals half-finished.
Round 3 – Now, turn work so that the WS is facing you. *Work 1ss into each st up along side of petal, 1ss into turning ch, then 1ss into each st down along other side of petal. Rep from * to end. You will have now completed 14 petals.

Tip

If you find that some of the yellow is showing through from the back of the petal bases, just do a little running stitch around in white to tidy it up.

Stem

Work throughout in dc rounds with no joins between rounds.
With 3mm hook and blue yarn, make foundation loop and 1ch.
Round 1 – 7dc into floop. 7 sts
Round 2-19 – Work even in dc.
Work ss to finish, then fasten off.

Join flower to stem

With a darning needle and a length of yellow yarn, firmly stitch flower centre to tip of stem.

Finishing

Darn in any loose ends. Place daisy flower toppers onto pencils (or pens) and arrange them in the vase.

More small gifts...

Tea-lovers everywhere will love our cosy's contemporary look
Turn to page 29

Make fab keyrings to sell – we've got three styles to get you started
Turn to page 15

3 really useful *embellishments*

ADD THAT LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA IN AN INSTANT

Carved creations

There are just so many uses for these elegant wooden hearts, how pretty would they look at a wedding? They're unvarnished, so let your imagination run wild as you paint, distress and decorate them however you wish, or leave them as they are for a natural finish.

✻ **Wooden Shapes – Hearts, £3.49.** *To order, visit www.handyhippo.co.uk*

Fruit salad

When you're creating lots of stationery, you need a greeting that looks super-stylish with minimum fuss. These colourful die-cuts have both of those – just attach them with a sticky fixer for fabulousness in a flash. Or, try turning them into badges to add to greeting cards. Clever, eh?

✻ **Fruit Scoop – In Circle Messages, £3.50 for 64.** *To order, call ☎ 0113 287 7794 or visit www.craftworkcards.co.uk*

Jingle bells

Jingle bells are irresistible (especially as Christmas will be here before we know it). They also have so much crafting potential – stitch them onto stockings, add them to cards and even pop them onto jewellery for a musical touch in your projects today.

✻ **Mini Metallic Bells, £3.99 for 200.** *To order, call ☎ 0844 576 8922 or visit www.bakerross.co.uk*

My craft shop

Do you want to be your own boss? Three Folksy sellers tell us what it takes...

BY LUCY KENNEDY

→ Laura Howard from Gloucester
Lupin Handmade

"My hobby is my job"

Laura's love for crafts and felting turned into a fun and fulfilling career...

I've always been crafty and enjoyed making things with felt, but it was after university when I was unemployed for a while due to ill health, very bored and a bit depressed, that I turned to crafting. I opened an Etsy shop in 2007 and signed up to Folksy a year later. I sell my hand-stitched felt accessories, packs of felt squares and other craft supplies.

I've grown my business, Lupin Handmade, gradually, and it became my full-time job in spring 2009. It started as a hobby, without any ambitions to turn it into a business, and (if I'm honest) not a clue what I was doing!

As well as running my shops, I write tutorials for books and magazines. I'm also hugely excited to have written my first craft book, *Super-Cute Felt*, out this autumn.

It started as a hobby, without any ambitions to turn it into a business

→ **Visit:** ***www.folksy.com/shops/lupin***

When starting a business, always be original – you'll be more successful if you sell something unique.

→ Danielle Hoggins, from Kent
The Patchwork Bride

"I love my craft shop"

Danielle's decorative idea became a business model

I came up with the idea of making wedding bouquets out of buttons and ribbons a few years ago, when I was planning my own wedding. I love flowers, but always felt sad that the blooms would fade and die days after the ceremony. I wanted something more permanent – a keepsake. The bouquets certainly made quite an impression on guests at my wedding. Then, a friend asked if I would mind making a button bouquet for their wedding, and my business developed from there.

→ Carol Capaldi, from Cambridge
Carols Crafts

"I've created a career"

Carol's crafting ambition has given her a wealth of industry expertise...

I've always loved making things. I'm a self-taught crafter, learning from a combination of books and the internet – with all the different crafts out there, there's so much to learn.

At the moment, I mainly make and sell polymer clay jewellery and beads – I love experimenting with different textures and effects.

I found Folksy easy to set up, and the forums are a great place to network

Network know-how

I began selling my creations at craft fairs about 12 years ago, and on Folksy two years ago. I wanted an online presence, but launching my own website was a bit too much for me. I found Folksy easy to set up, and the forums are a great place to network and promote items.

I run special online sales and auctions on Facebook, which have been really successful. I also teach craft workshops, and I'm part of a local co-operative called Moray Makers which helps crafters to sell their creations in the community.

Carol's Top TIP

If you're planning to sell your handmade items, think about your goals and where you want to take your crafting. Look at your target market and research the best places to get your supplies. When you get a feel for what sells well and you build up your sales, you will get a better idea of whether you want to continue and make it a full-time business. Most of all, enjoy it!

→ **Visit:** *www.folksy.com/shops/carolscrafts*

1 Polymer clay chocolate keyrings
2 Polymer gingham bracelet
3 Polymer clay doughnut charms

To have and to hold

As interest grew, I thought there might be a market for what I was doing – there wasn't anything like my bouquets in the UK. So, I set up a Folksy shop early this year, and the site has been great for my business.

As well as button bouquets, I sell corsages, pomanders, buttonholes, table centrepieces and decorations. I offer to personalise my creations for clients too. I like the idea that every year you can get items out that you had on your big day.

I get great pleasure out of creating something special and unique

Danielle's Top TIP

I'd advise anyone setting up a business to do it for the love of the craft first; be prepared to work hard! There's nothing better than selling something you've put time and effort into.

→ **Visit:** *www.folksy.com/shops/thepatchworkbride*

Crafting for charity

Knitting needles at the ready; create mice, mitts and mini bobble hats for good causes

BY STEVE WRIGHT

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home

Your knitted projects could help keep homeless cats and dogs happy...

The Battersea Dogs & Cats Home is asking knitters to make small toys or blankets for the canines and felines who stay there

Fancy putting your budding craft skills at the service of a lonely feline? Every year in the UK, thousands of cats and dogs find their way to Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, either brought there by owners who can no longer cope with the responsibility, or – in the majority of cases – simply picked up off the streets where they've been left to fend for themselves.

Battersea Dogs' Home was founded to accommodate the capital's stray dogs in 1860, and the first felines were welcomed in 23 years later. These days, some 250 cats and 650 dogs arrive each month at Battersea's three sites, including its historic south London HQ. On average, animals will stay for around a month and, although the good folk at Battersea have made the Home as welcoming and stimulating a place as they possibly can, boredom and loneliness can inevitably set in. Which is where you and your needles come in...

How you can help:

Battersea is currently running a 'cat knit drive', asking knitters and keen crafters to pick up a pair of needles and knit a cuddly mouse for the resident felines to play with while they wait for new homes. Easy to make, the mice are perfect for beginners, and there are free downloadable instructions on the Battersea website. Battersea also accepts knitted coats for the dogs and blankets for cats – a knitting pattern for the latter is also downloadable from the website. Once your creations are complete, you can post them to Battersea's HQ – the address is on the website.

Find out more by visiting www.battersea.org.uk

Battersea is asking knitters to make cuddly mice for cats to play with while they wait for new homes

Breast Cancer charity

Don't stop at the crafting – get selling too, and help raise funds for Breakthrough Breast Cancer

Yvonne, fundraiser for BCC, tried to make the world's biggest bra out of bras

If the social side of crafting and selling appeals to you as much as the creative nitty-gritty, community fundraising could be a perfect project. Craft sales and fairs offer a great way to get crafting, donate to charity and connect with like-minded people.

Breakthrough Breast Cancer (BBC) is the UK's leading charity committed to fighting breast cancer through research, campaigning and education. The charity has an active fundraising division, with thousands of supporters raising money through balls and coffee mornings to golf days and road races. And the craft sale is a very popular fundraising annual.

"Community fundraisers putting on events, sales, cake bakes and demonstrations are hugely important to BBC, as they're raising vital funds and awareness for our work," says Breakthrough's Community Fundraising Assistant, Katherine Johnston. "Craft sales are a fantastic way of sharing expertise, meeting new people and having fun. With crafts gaining in popularity we are seeing more and more people getting creative for charity. We'd love to hear from anyone who wants to use their imaginative ideas to help beat breast cancer."

How you can help:

Sara Bloomer, a former breast cancer sufferer herself, sells the delightful Mitts for Tits, pioneered and created by three friends. "All three are very productive knitters: one knits a pair of mitts each night while watching television! Her daughter-in-law obtains the wool, often via donations, and I sell the Mitts for £6 a pair at sales, fundraisers and to friends. They're very popular, and we've made hundreds of pounds.

"Choose a charity that means something to you," Sara advises. "I was lucky that my breast cancer could be treated, but I have friends who have died, and I want to help BBC find a cure."

Visit www.breakthrough.org.uk or katherinej@breakthrough.org.uk

Money from the hats helps Age UK's Spread the Warmth scheme, which funds a range of winter services

Innocent Drinks

These cute bobble hats will bring warmth and good cheer to the elderly this winter

Every autumn since 2005, healthy drinks company innocent have invited all knitters to pick up their needles for the company's annual Big Knit. The premise is simple – knit a tiny bobble hat to go on top of one of innocent's hugely popular smoothies, on sale that winter in branches of Sainsbury's and Boots, with 25p from each bottle sold going to Age UK. That helps the charity's Spread the Warmth campaign, which funds a range of winter services from heating and hot meals to social activities.

Since that first year, some 2.5 million hats have been knitted, raising over £850,000. Dawn French, Russell Brand, Sienna Miller and designers Jenny Jackson and Paul South have even contributed their own knitted hat designs. This year's target is 650,000 hats, which will raise over £650,000 for Age UK.

"We started the Big Knit as an innocent way of raising money to help keep older people warm in winter," explains innocent's Annika Lewis. "So its first three years the scheme was called Superpram, but as more and more hats came in, not all of them fitted grandmothers. The Big Knit seemed more fitting."

How you can help:

You can find three basic patterns, which you can then customise as you please, on the Big Knit website. There's no limit to the number of hats you knit – the more the better! Post them to the innocent HQ (address on the website) or drop them off at a participating Age UK centre. The deadline for submissions for this year's Big Knit is 14 October.

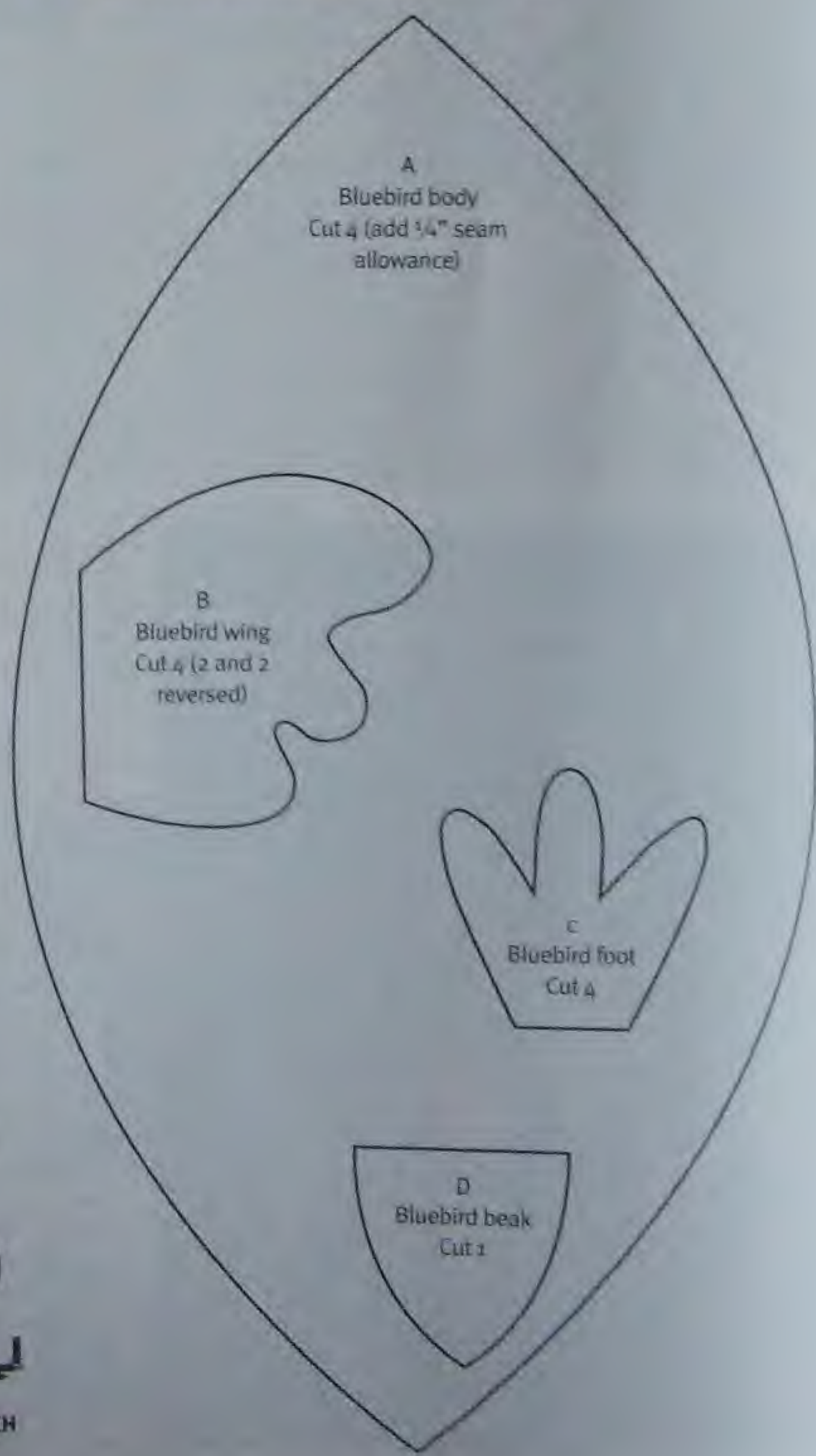
Find out more by visiting www.innocentdrinks.co.uk/bigknit

Templates

Photocopy these templates to make the Little round bluebird on page 6 and Bunny feltie on page 24...

* Bunny templates (actual size)

* Bluebird templates (actual size)



BLUEBIRD STITCHES

SATIN STITCH

LADDER STITCH

BLANKET STITCH

INFO BOX
Size: various
Takes: 1½ hours
Costs: £1

Cool yule

Use these festive, fun-filled bonus papers to kickstart your Christmas cardmaking this year! Sharon Armstrong provides inspiration...

BY SHARON ARMSTRONG

Selling your own Christmas cards is a great way to show off your crafting skills, as well as give people a special way to say Happy Christmas to friends and family. Our selection of free paper downloads gives you plenty of creative cardmaking scope, and here are a few ideas to get started.

← LET IT SNOW

Layer a piece of white card onto a square red base card. Punch a decorative border across the bottom of a square of snowman paper and attach to a square of red card. Wrap ribbon round the panel and stick to the base. Add paper flowers with buttons in the centres. Add a greeting and a ribbon bow, as shown. Stick a strip of snowman paper across the top corner, to finish.

CHRISTMAS WISH ↓

Stick a strip of red card across a square white base. Attach green ribbon and a bow. Trim a piece of reindeer paper, attach to base and add a strip of red ribbon on top. Add a greeting, paper flower and brad, as shown, to finish.

SEASON'S ↓ GREETINGS

Trim a square of Christmas puddings paper and layer onto white card. Wrap with lace ribbon and stick to the front of a square green base card. Decorate with a ribbon bow. Add greeting and brad, to finish.

Meet... Amity Roach

Etsy's UK community manager fills us in on what she loves most about the site...

How did you first get involved with Etsy UK?
It was a happy accident, really! I first stumbled across Etsy in 2006 while looking for somewhere online to sell my photography. The site inspired me to try my hand at making jewellery, and thanks to the advice and support I received on Esty, I soon had a very healthy business on my hands. When a call was put out for a London-based blogger, I jumped at the chance.

What's your favourite thing about Etsy?
It's extremely hard to pick just one thing, but the sheer amount of extraordinary creativity inspires me on a daily basis. I think that because Etsy was conceived of and designed by artists (it continues to be so), it's sort of irresistible to kindred spirits. It draws them in like the mothership. The creativity and the people are my favourite things.

"It's such a great feeling to know that people are enjoying your crafts all over the world"

What makes Etsy so special?
Because we're a global marketplace, you can find yourself sending packages pretty much anywhere, which I've always found amazing. It's a great to know that people are enjoying your crafts all over the world. We've been busy tweaking the site specifically for makers and buyers in the UK, so they can filter search results to just see items in the UK, or even in a specific town. And Etsy isn't just about selling – it also gives you an online presence without having to set up your own website; having an Etsy shop works as an online portfolio. It got me several jobs in the fashion industry before I decided to focus on my business full-time. I've also been contacted directly through Etsy by numerous bricks-and-mortar retailers to stock their shelves. I was even approached to create a one-off couture line of jewellery for one of London's most prestigious hotels!

What's the future like for the site, and for you?
Onwards and upwards! Etsy is expanding in about every way imaginable here and around the world. We're focused on bringing new buyers to the site, while also educating sellers on how to make the most of their shop and handle all aspects of their business. My jewellery shop (allthosethrees.etsy.com) is currently on hiatus so that I can focus on my work with Etsy and other creative avenues, but I've been teaching myself some new craft skills and will be back!

Amity Roach is taking a break from her jewellery shop while she focuses on her role as Etsy UK community manager – you can get in touch through her profile at www.etsy.com/people/AmityUK